MEN'S PULP-MAG LIT, 1905-1924

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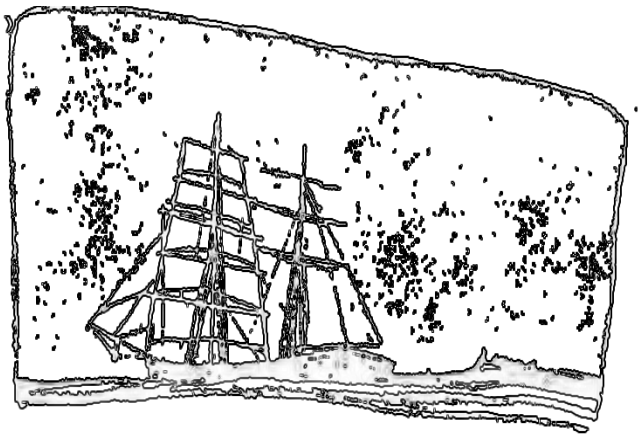

Old Sea Flower

by Bill Adams
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from *Adventure*, December 10, 1924

HIS SHIP completing the loading of her nitrate cargo in the port of Iquique, Captain Elias, seat- ed at the table in her saloon, stared at the scarlet poppies and the purple iris painted upon the bird's-eye maple panels before him. At his back, in the center of the after-bulkhead, hung a lifebuoy; kept there for twenty years past for bis wife in case of need. The ship's name was on the upper arc of the buoy, in bright crimson letters, unlike the black lettering of the buoys at the taffrail and break of the poop. By a similar fancy of the old man's, the ship's port of registry was omitted from the lower arc of the buoy, which was decorated instead by flower and by bud of painted poppy and iris; the painting upon the buoy, like that of the wood panels of the saloon, the handiwork of the old man's wife.
Elias was a man of stumpy build, of large and bony face; his white hair, long and thick, inclined to waviness; his chin hidden under a white beard that grew well down upon his chest. His whiskers came high upon his cheek bones, his wrinkled nose and brow-protected, crow-footed eyes thus framed in a close circle pf hair which was white as the low drooping locks above his half-hidden forehead. There was an easy lightness in his step, a bear-like confidence

in his feet. He ambled, somewhat as bears amble; in his shoulders the lurch of a peaceful old bear who seeks no trouble. His eyes, like a seaway under cloudy weather, seemed neither blue nor gray; slightly inquisitive old eyes that told of oft tried patience; of possibilities also for overwhelming wrath.

Seated alone in his saloon, looking backward over long years, the old captain recalled the far-away days of his first voyage, which at one moment seemed to have been a voyage begun but yesterday; at another to have been made by some other than he, so distant did it seem.
About to leave Iquique, upon his last sea passage, Elias was homeward bound, for the final time.
The ship, a battered Triton, was a travesty of what she once had been; her spars warped, her sides eaten thin by hunger of many seas, by rust of many voyages. No- fresh paint, no gold leaf, might ever make her figurehead seem young again; her figurehead—a war-worn warrior whose scarred features still gazed courageously across the varying waters. In his remaining hand was gripped a dull edged sword. His shield was long since lost, when, by the grinding of ice cakes, his left arm had been torn to the waves. Three wooden ostrich feathers upon his helmet's crest were chipped and forlorn, and defiance had long ago been replaced by a quaint appearance of patience in his eyes.
When, over a year ago, Elias had taken his ship across the Mersey bar, the owner, shaking hands with him for the last time, had bidden him and his old wife farewell.

"Where's the boy?" Mrs. Elias had asked, and the owner, smiling, had shaken his head.
"You'll probably be in the trades before his ship gets in."

Mrs. Elias was short as her husband, and, like him, square of frame; an old sea-woman known wherever her husband was known. Her white hair, trimmed shorter than his, stood in wiry curls around an open face. Her eyes, like her husband's; her voice, though feminine, was not greatly dissimilar to his. Like her man, Mrs. Elias knew sun and star intimately and could guide a ship's way by them. The lore of the sea as much her own as his, they had all things in common; the life of each made complete by that of the other. They were a childless pair.

Recalling the first years of his long captaincy Elias brought to mind old sailing days of years ago, and, seeing the owner whom he had served so long, recalled a day, when, a little lad beside him, the owner had come down to bid the ship farewell. He remembered his, and his wife's, words at parting, and the owner's answer.

"You'd better let us take him," from Mrs. Elias, and a shake of the head from the owner with the answer—
"Perhaps, when he's older."

The child was motherless.
He remembered his own question, when he came from sea again, at another voyage's ending.

"Where's the boy?" and, from the owner, "He's at school."
"He'll soon be old enough to go to sea," from himself and his wife; then a smile upon the owner's face, neither assenting nor dissenting.

A perplexed look came to the old man's face;memory of disappointment making his eyes gray, dulling the blue in them.
Childless themselves, they had waited patiently for the day to come when the owner's son should have been old enough to go to sea. He should be their charge, theirs the pride of his teaching in the old sea ways.
Memory of a later voyage's ending came to him, bringing the owner's reply to their old query—
"Where's the boy?"
The boy was gone to sea—with a ship of a different line, while Elias and his wife were yet homebound.
Times had changed at sea since the days of

their first command, and together they had watched the slow change as it came. Of recent years such ships as came from the builders came fitted with donkey engines wherewith to hoist their topsails and to heave their anchors in.

Lanyard rigging long ago replaced by screw, seamanship had been abandoned for a blacksmith's trade, and where in old days block and tackle had been the insignia of a sailor's calling nothing but a crow bar now was needed. Seamen continually replaced by navigators, seamanship was fast becoming a lost art, a craft whose fine day was going to the discard. A cloud beneath which the day of old men was fading away had overspread both port and ocean. Elias and his wife had asked no explanation, and, no explanation offered them, had hidden their hurt.

Bidding the owner a last good-by ere he had sailed on this, his last voyage, Elia§, his eyes toward the river bar, had said—

"When we're settled in Alameda and his ship comes to Frisco, send him to see us."

They had come, in due course, to San Francisco. A bungalow, purchased upon a previous voyage, awaited them across the bay beside the quiet Alameda water front, flowers on its low pergola, roses on its lattice fence. In Alameda, home at length, finding peace in retirement, they would treasure peace together; the ship and sea for ever passed from out of their lives.

When they had been four weeks in San Francisco the bungalow was ready for them, and, all their possessions transferred to it, nothing but necessities of life were left aboard. Door mats made of rope by sailors on many idle tropic days were sent ashore. Canvas mops hung in a row upon the kitchen wall. The ship denuded of what ever had been theirs, iris and poppy had taken on a lifeless, a chill, deserted look.

"We'll take the buoy, when we go," Elias had said, and her eyes upon the ship's name on its upper arc, his wife had smilingly assented.

Upon the very day on which they were to have left the ship a mysterious malady descending on the old lady had left her powerless. Without suffering she had lain still, her interest seemingly gone.
Fetched by the mate a doctor had come aboard, and had shaken his head.

With scant faith in the long-shore doctors, great faith in the healing power of
the sea where, amid those who live by her, sickness is but rare, the old man had cabled his owner in Liverpool and again prepared to take the ship away. Confident that the voyage would heal his enfeebled wife he intended a quick run to and back from Sydney, and, long accustomed to all emergency, remained unperturbed.

Delayed by long chafing through a succession of head winds on the equator, the passage to Sydney had been slow; but since a measure of health returned soon after sailing day both were content to bide their time, and wait the voyage's ending.

IN SYDNEY a stranger brought a letter aboard direct from the owner.
When this reaches you I shall have gone on. I you can discharge your mate take the bearer ii his place. For as long as you may, keep an eye 01 him for me.

Scarce staying to greet the bearer of the letter Elias had hurried below, leaving him alone in the chart room whence he stared over the harbor. The stranger was a strong framed man in the mid-twenties, wide of shoulder and of medium height; a loose-lipped, vacant-eyed fellow whose gaze had been dull while the old captain had pored over his father's letter.

There was a ring upon one of his fingers. No man can handle canvas aloft with rings on his

fingers and Elias, whose own shortfingered hands were bare and brown, despised all such baubles. But catching sight of the ring he had seen nothing wrong about it—this was the owner's son; the ring a funny fancy.

The newcomer had turned lusterless eyes upon the old man as he hurried below to his wife, and, his loose lips fallen a little apart, his eyelids drooping, had smiled; as though derisively at age.
Opening the door of their cabin, Elias, almost childishly excited, had called his wife,

"He's come—he's here," he said.
Mrs. Elias lay prone upon the bed. Erect at the bedside, aquiver with his tidings, her man read the letter to her: all unconscious that she was but semi-conscious; then bent over her,
"See? he's come!"

She had looked up at him then, and had stared as if perplexed at the bare bulk¬
heads about her, at the bare planks below. A light of faint understanding in her face she whispered, her low spoken words but half distinguishable. Elias stooped above her,

"Eh? what is it? Not sick again?" he cried.
"Tired," she whispered.
"You'll see him soon. He'll be our mate. I wish we'd had him sooner," he said.

Though always supposing that he did so, Elias knew naught of illness. He'd doctored many an ailing sailor in his day, and, nonchalantly dosing ailing fo'c'sle hands with medicines taken from the medicine chest in the after store room had mixed for many a malingerer a dose of salts. Once in a while he'd concocted a bottle of paregoric, and usually the man had recovered sufficiently to return to duty, which was all that mattered.

Contemptuous of sickness, he had been familiar with death by the sea's way. Men had gone overboard at night, some to be brought back aboard again, some to be lost. Such things were a part of existence, and to be taken as they came. Immune ,from harm himself he had ever supposed his wife to have been equally immune. There was in him the simplicity of folks to whom death is real for all save for themselves.

"You'll soon be right," he said and, leaving her, turned at the doorway to add, "I'll go talk to the mate and get him to take a discharge. We'll have this big fellow with us for a while at least."
"I'll charter her for Chili," he said to himself, seeking the mate. "That'll give us longer to have him with us. Aye, we'll keep an eye on him."

Soon he was back with the old woman, his eyes shining like two blue crests of waves beneath the sun.
"The old mate's going ashore. He didn't mind. I've signed the new one on and he's gone off to fetch his dunnage now."
He prowled to and fro, along his poop, and up and down about his quarterdeck, and in and out the cabin, where he said:
"You'll soon be fine. We'll take him to see the house when we get in to Frisco."
The two of them alone together he chattered to her in their cabin:
"I'm chartering her for Chili, to Iquique. We'll keep him with us for a while—we'll take the long way home. She'll be his when we leave her. He'll take good care of her. He's a big fellow. ' '

He went out to the quarterdeck, where the second mate coming to him, spoke of a fine berth proffered him aboard a big ship Greenock-bound, and asked release. The new mate returned aboard at that minute and Elias turned to him—

"Mister, where can I get a second if I let him go?"
The mate bore a canvas bag flung carelessly across his shoulder,
"That's easy. I'll get you one," he said.

At that the old man started, half unconsciously

—an omitted "sir." There are old rules at sea, and age-old customs. Yet this was the owner's son, a friend.
Elias went to his wife again.

"He's getting a second, a friend of his; a smart young chap he says. We'll have good luck on the road home."
At sight of her wan features he, despite himself, sensed a sudden chill.
"Sooner go to Frisco direct? She's not chartered yet," he said, and seeing her smile shook all distrust away. He went to prowl forth and back upon his poop again— an old bear fervid with the spring's awaking.

The mate brought the new second to the ship, a mere boy; a sea apprentice but now released from his apprenticeship, a lad come out of the same great modern ship by which the mate had come from Liverpool.

"All right," Elias said.
Later he rejoined his wife.
"We'll start to load tomorrow, and be away in forty-eight hours."
She seemed to sleep, and he returned to the deck's bustle.
"Mister, I'll leave the getting of a, crew to you. My wife's not very well. You look after the ship," he said to his new mate.
"All right," the mate replied, and Elias sensed a chill again, an undefined distrust in something somewhere.

True to all sea tradition there could be no converse between mate and master save such as pertained to ship's affairs. In such matters, directing as little as might be, it had ever been his custom to give his mates free rein.

"You'll find her a good ship, mister," he said.
The mate made no reply, and visioning suddenly the long road home by way of Chili, the short run to 'Frisco direct, he stared aloft to his tophamper; then, seeming to shake himself, passed below, content.

He smiled at sight of the lifebuoy on the bulkhead as he passed it by. It was a part of the home that was so soon to be. It would be taken ashore, whither all that was his, and his wife's, was already gone.
Winds had blown out of the west along the road to Chili, so that the old ship had flown; with small call for any sailoring on the part of her fo'csle hands. Elias had been content to ignore that riffraff company —a sorry lot the mate had gathered.

Mrs. Elias tottered about cabin and saloon, and sat of evenings on the poop.
"He'll take care of her when we leave her. She'll be his," they said, and seated on the skylight watched the broad back of the mate, who stood immobile beside the forward binnacle.
Thus they had come to Chili.

WHILE Elias stared at the flowered panels before him the alleyway door was opened and the mate looked in.
"The tugboat's alongside," he said.

From the quarterdeck Elias caught the faint tap-tapping of the carpenter's mallet; the carpenter battening down the after hatches ready for sea. At thought of his crew he frowned a little—the first crew the choosing of which had been left to any save himself. Larrikins from Sydney, come to the sea to escape the jails; beachcombers signed on while staggered with cheap spirits; debauched deck hands from shapeless tramp steamers. Four deserters had been replaced with Iquique Chilanos.
A short blast came from the tugboat, whose acrid smoke hung about the quarterdeck and drifted thinly through the alley- way door into the cabin. Elias rose and went up to his poop.

In a little while the ship was away, the steamer masts in the roadstead astern become a dim forest of attenuated trees, the coast grown indistinct in fading daylight. Elias went below

again, and passing through the saloon approached his cabin.
"We'll soon be home: It looks like wind," he said, opening the cabin door.

As he closed the door behind him he stared in amazement. Her face to the deck above, his wife lay outstretched upon the deck, sightless eyes gazing glassily. Calling no help, he bent over her and raising her in his yet powerful arms laid her upon the bed.
From the deck he heard the outcry of the crew, who braced the crossjack yards in. Presently the voices died away; the hands gone forward with the second mate to trim the yards upon the fore and main. From overhead came the slow thud of the chief mate's boots; the mate walking the poop.
Along the now shadowy deck the sail- maker walked aft, his eyes upturned to watch the set of the mizzen topmast staysail. He was tall and gray mustached; a long-legged, spindly dressmaker for ships, to whom the word "home" held no significance; a voyage's length of no import whatever to him.

He'd been Elias' sailmaker for many voyages. The antique ship was long since become his home. Knowing her desire, he knew all that Elias willed for her—full power of wind in her canvas, for holding and for driving. Since their first voyage together, as sailmaker and captain, there had never been any discussion of the sailmaker's craft. He was Elias' right-hand man — part of the ship.
Come to the break of the poop the sailmaker met the mate, face to face in the gloom, and asked a brief question, inquiring of Mrs. Elias.

Making no verbal reply, the mate shrugged his shoulders.
His eyes on the set of the staysail, the sailmaker turned away. Loose in the belly, the staysail hung at slack halyards, its canvas a little wrinkled—the sailmaker's affair in a way; yet, since the sail was set, the mate's affair yet more. A hint of scorn in his eyes he descended through the chart room to the saloon. He crossed the saloon and stood for a moment, bent and listening, at the skipper's door; then returned to the deck.

When he entered his room at the after end of the midship house the carpenter looked up. They shared the room, bunk above bunk; the carpenter lean as his partner and, like him, heavily mustached and beardless—a bald, crow-footed seaman come from the days of sail to a perplexed, somewhat listless old age. Swede and Fin, they had set out in life together; had grown up together, bickering as Fin and Swede bicker; but inseparable.

Having joined Elias together they had remained with him ever since; each caring
for her unbidden by the master. The carpenter, familiar with every seam between her planks, knew when each seam was last calked; when, under ordinary circumstances, each seam would next need calking. Much of her woodwork was his fashioning; her gangway and blocks without number, and several of her upper yards.

That the lower yards were warped was no fault of his: That was age and the sea; just as were the bow in his shoulders and the stoop at his waist. The gig, built of Java teak, and the envy of all shipmasters desirous of beauty, was his handiwork.

The carpenter looked a question at the sailmaker, who, replying with a shake of the head, remained silent.
Mrs. Elias lay with wide eyes fixed upon the telltale compass fastened face downward to the deck above her pillow, which was Elias' pillow also; as if she watched the course for Alameda. Elias, seated on the chair at her bedside was an indistinct shape in the unlighted cabin. He sat till the cabin was quite dark; then rose and lighted the lamp. The flame turned low, he returned to his seat and bent for a moment above his wife; then, straightening suddenly, stepped back across the cabin and turned the

lamp high.

Its tones softened by the intervening deck, the brass bell upon the poop above clanged softly. Of a sudden the ship was become strange. Elias whispered to his wife, and bending above her called her by name, once, twice, and again; then, a strikingly forlorn figure, stood erect. For a time he appeared to be an image carved from stone; then, stepping to the cabin door passed quickly through and entered the saloon.
The mate sat at the saloon table, ami, eating heartily, wiped his loose lips with a large smooth hand. His eyes, ignoring the steward, followed the dishes that the steward set before him; the steward a stunted and disheveled negro in whose ears were large rings.

The one intent upon his eating, the other upon his work, neither mate nor steward looked up when the old man entered. Passing behind the mate he went to the door of the alleyway leading out to the quarterdeck, and, turning backward when he reached it seemed about to speak; but hurried away instead, to the open deck; ambling with acurious uncertaintyinhis step.

The sailmaker and carpenter, rising as the skipper appeared at their door, looked at him in silence. He turned at once away, back to the night-gloomed deck, and was immediately followed by both of them.
When the three old men came aft together one behind another, the mate and the second mate were talking on the poop. Elias, passing through the saloon, spoke to the steward—
"Tell the second mate to-get his supper."

He entered the cabin and sat at his wife's side; the carpenter standing at the bed's foot while the sailmaker went forward again, to return in a little while with a roll of sail cloth tucked under his arm. They worked together, without any words. By and by the sailmaker and carpenter went away and left Elias alone with his wife; a needle in his right hand, a palm upon his left, and twine over his shoulders. Long ago Elias, too, had been a sailmaker. Now he used his gentle craft again.

The sailmaker and carpenter seated themselves, side by side, on the after hatch, under the stars, ready should they be needed; the sailmaker staring up to the loom of while canvas above them; the carpenter's eyes upon the planks at their feet. The decks hidden by the night, the sea talked in whispers around the silent ship.

Bye and bye the poop bell clanged again, and was answered at once by the bell at the fo'csle break. The after and the forward bell spoke to one another, though aloud, discreetly.
A sailor walked aft to relieve the wheel.

Upon the poop the two mates were talking in low voices, and, his shadow dim against the lower stars, the relief for the wheel passed close to them.
"I'll bet he puts her in the nitrate," said the mate to the second.
A moment later the wheel relief, taking the wheel over, spoke to the helmsman,
"Der olt vooman iss dead. Dey buries her in de nitrate."

THE helmsman went forward and entered the fo'csle, where his shipmates idled in their bunks and on their sea chests. Victims of the booze and of the boarding master's crimps, they looked up at him from faces that told of nights in sailortown; Of sleepless nights of liquor and of women. Women's pictures were hung upon the bulkheads above the frowzy bedding in some of their bunks. Here and there a bottle was hidden away, beneath a mattress or in a canvas seabag. They returned to their talk, jibbering in many lingoes—Chilano muttering to Chil- ano, white man to white.

" 'T'old woman's kicked it," said the helmsman in the doorway, and they all looked up again for a moment; then returned to their talk.
" 'Ee's goin' to stick 'er in the nitrate,' said the

helmsman, in the doorway still, and again they all looked up at him.
"Wot for in the nitrate?" asked a young, pimply-faced man.
"Preserves 'em," grunted a man, who, half naked, sat rubbing dubbin into a pair of big leather sea boots.

They stared at the helmsman and at one another, only the four Chilanos continuing their talk.
"Corpuses is bad luck," said one.
"You knows it, they is," said the pimplyfaced man, and a sort of quiver ran from one to another of them, so that the four Chilanos looked up to listen.
" 'E figures to bury 'er ashore w'en we gets to 'Frisco," said the half naked man drawing a sea boot upon a sockless foot.
"Vee nedder coom to shore, poys—dot sure," cried a big sailor, who rose upon unsteady feet.
"Dot ain'd right," he added
"Vot we goin' to do?" he asked, glowering round at them, seated all about him.
"De mate iss fat.like a girl," said one, and they all laughed; the four Chilanos joining in the laughter.
The helmsman stood staring at a woman's picture in one of the upper bunks.
"Veil, vot we goin' to do 'bout it?" asked the big man, and sat down heavily.
"Here's the mate," said the helmsman, as from the deck behind him the mate's voice called, "Clue up the for' t'gall'sl."

The weather was become squally from the south, the ship slipping along with a high slap of water all about her.
They piled out and made for the topgallant gear; the pimply-faced man loitering to reach a bottle from under another's pillow and steal a long swallow. He followed them to the deck upqp unsteady feet.

"Four of you aloft and make it fast," said the mate, when the sail was clued up, and the pimply^faced man climbed to invisible rattlines to follow three others aloft to the spar, where the sail flapped in the darkness high above them.
A squall blew out of the south and, whipping through the rigging, lifted the ship forward with a shuddering leap. There was a heavy thud upon the deck below the shrouds. While the men who were not gone aloft reentered the fo'csle the mate stumbled over, then bent to look at a shape upon the deck.
From aloft a voice called—
"There's only three of us up."
Called by the mate, the men were gathering round, and bending above the fallen, man.
"Get aloft one of you. Help them to roll up that sail," said the mate, and another hand climbed to the rigging.
Two men were furling the weather side of the sail, one man alone on the lee yardarm. The fourth man joined him there.

"Skinny's killed hisself," he shouted in his partner's ear.
"Vott's dot?" called the big sailor, who, working to windward, just caught the speaker's words.
"Vott you says?" he shouted.
The fourth man repeated his words, loud above the wind's cry, more than a hundred feet up in the night.

The sail made fast, the four of them stood in the bunt, and, their individual shapes blurry in the darkness, talked in loud tones; their voices inaudible on the deck far below.
On deck the second mate had fetched the sailmaker, who came forward with the carpenter at his heels. The sailors knelt about the body of the pimply-faced man.

"Wot about the old woman, Sails?" asked one of them as the sailmaker came up.
The sailmaker looked at him through the darkness, without reply; then knelt at the dead man's side.
" 'E ain't goin' to put 'er in the nitrate, is he?" asked a sailor, and the carpenter glowered unseen. *

The big man and his three companions jumped from the shrouds to the deck.

Under the fo'csle head the sailmaker plied his needle, the carpenter seated on a door sill behind him. The watch on deck was joined by the men from aloft and all talked, all at once; the watch below, who were turning into their bunks, listening to them, their faces above the bunk edges.
One by one the watch below slumbered, while the others talked till midnight came. At midnight the watches changed places and the sleepers, awakened for their four hour shift, talked of death and of liquor and women till their turn came round to sleep once more at four of a windy morning. They muttered and cursed, and laughed alternately, all of them saying the same thing in the end—
"We waits and sees."

Throughout the night Elias, seated at the bedside beside the canvassed form of his wife, nodded in his cabin.
At eight bells of the morning the mate blew his whistle, calling the crew out to check the weather main braces that the ship might be brought to a stop. When she lay, idle on the tumbling sea, the men walked forward, moodily, and, talking in low voices, questioned one another. The big man was at the wheel. Soon they came from beneath the fo'csle head, bearing between them the pimply-faced man.

At the moment that they rested his feet upon the quarter railing the sailmaker and carpenter, Elias at their heels, stepped from the cabin alleyway door, bearing between them another canvas covered form. They laid it upon the quarterdeck; then commenced to unbatten and to take off the after hatches. The sailors stared at them, their eyes very wide.
The mate spoke to the bearers of the pimply-faced man.

"Lay him on the deck. Two of you help get those hatches off."

They stared at the mate, as if not understanding him, and none of them moved. The sailmaker and carpenter, having opened the hatch, went below, to the top of the cargo—nitrate sacks piled pyramid- wise in the ship's hold, and already well settled. They cut sacks open and smoothing the loosened nitrate, made a trough in.
A man in newly dubbined sea boots stepped up to the mate and whispered to him, his voice inaudible to his mess-mates, and to Elias, who with his back to the other side of the hatch looked over the sea.

The mate, a scornful stare in his face, shrugged his shoulders; then stepped toward Elias. ...
"They want that fellow buried in the sea," he said.

Elias turned slowly about, his open gaze upon the sailors, his head thrust a little forward, so that they involuntarily drew toward one another, their backs to the railing. Voiceless assent in his gaze he looked at the mate, who returned at once to the sailors.
They lifted the pimply-faced man and laid his feet on the rail again; then stood waiting, their faces abashed as they watched Elias, who staring back at them as if he did not see them, gazed beyond them.
A sudden sea, a sharp browed swift running swell that broke to smother round her counter, lifted the ship, and Elias, steadying himself with a hand on the hatch coaming, looked down to the sailmaker and carpenter on the nitrate below. The mate laid a hand on the poop ladder, while the sailors, thrown one against another, grasped brace pins and one another's arms. The swell ran forward, a lather round the ship's sides, and, as she steadied, the bearers of the pimply-faced man recovered themselves. They stood blank-faced and dumb while their dark browed mess-mates murmured.

The pimply-faced man had slipped from their grasp and was gone to the sea.

"Go forward," said the mate, a suspicion of satire on his loose lip.

While they stood irresolute the head and shoulders of the sailmaker appeared above the hatch coaming, and, with the carpenter, he looked out upon them; the carpenter's eyes on a level with the hatch.
The mate and Elias were raising the form from the quarterdeck and laying it upon the hatch coaming. As the sailmaker and carpenter took it from them a sailor, pushed forward by his fellows, his eyes on Elias, walked slowly to the mate and whispered to Kin.

The sailmaker and carpenter were laying the canvas covered form down in the nitrate trough. Others of the crew joined the spokesman, whom the mate was ordering forward with impatient gestures. Elias, become suddenly aware of their proximity, peered at them from colorless eyes, his face thrust a little forward—after the manner of a bear that sniffs.

Rising from the hatch the sailmaker and carpenter stood to his either side.
"Go forward, all of you," said the mate, a ring of uncertainty in his voice; as if he were afraid of their insistence.

The big sailor, leaving the wheel to itself, ran to the quarterdeck and descending the ladder opposite the gathered company joined them from behind and thrust them aside.
"You goes to keel us all—vee not stand for dot," he said.

The ship, her main yards laid aback, lay easy on the sea; her helm useless until her yards be trimmed. The second mate watched from the poop.
"Vee goin' to put her in de sea," cried the big man, and pushed through his fellows till his face was close to the face of the mate.

The mate, his lips a little parted, stepped backward behind the three old men and left the big sailor face to face with Elias.
The wind was falling and a momentary sun shone brightly upon them all.
The mate, biting his lip, went to the poop to look down on them from beside the second.
The sailors watched their spokesman, and Elias with the two old men at his side.

THE sailmaker and carpenter stretched out their arms, in front of Elias, and stepping a little forward took the big sailor by his open shirt and flung him backward, so that he staggered among his shipmates.

"Get forward all of you," called the mate from the poop above, while the second whispered to him—
"He'd ought to bury her over the side."

As the stumbling man regained his feet Elias turned away and went to the alleyway door.
The sailmaker and carpenter, their faces blank as windless topsails, stepped toward the crew, who fell back.
"Vee ain'd goin' to stand fer it," said the big man, retreating before them, his face to their faces; but the others went forward, so that, left alone, he turned and followed them. Looking back over his shoulder he cursed the two old men on the quarterdeck, who, ignoring him, replaced the hatches and battened them down.

Side by side the two mates went forward together, and called to the men to square the mainyards; but the men glowered at them, speechless, from the fo'csle door. In their midst stood the big man, who said, over and over—
"Vee ain'd goin' to stand fer it."

Day drew on, with a falling wind. By noon the sea was calm, the sails limp upon the spars.
The mates walked the poop, side by side, and talked in low voices.
"He'd ought to bury her overside," said the second.
"It's his business," said the mate.

The sailmaker, seated on the after hatch, stitched an old sail. The carpenter tapped with his calking mallet at the quarterdeck seams. Elias sat by the empty bed, his face as white almost as his hair, his hands trembling a little now and then. He had brought the lifebuoy from the saloon bulkhead to his cabin and it lay on the bed, where he gazed at it.

Gaudy fish of the tropic waters disported below the broken armed figurehead, who searched with patient eyes along a motionless expanse of evening sea; as if desirous for a restful haven that never came.
The mates ate supper together; Elias remaining in his cabin. He nodded as night approached.
Night fell. Stars looked down upon the old ship, at whose side was no ripple.
Looking from fo'csle doors and ports, the men talked in whispers and, by and by, led by the big man, came to the invisible deck.
No bell clanged fore or aft. No lights were lighted.
The sailmaker and carpenter lay down, to doze alternately upon the after hatch, to sleep with their eyes open.

From the poop the mates stared landward through the night.
There was a blur of hastening silent figures upon the forward deck house. Fearful lest they waken ghosts of the dead or the eyes of the living the crew worked in soundless unison, until, lowered by tense hands, the long boat slipped, without splash or ripple into the sea abaft the fore
t stole out of the south, so that the ship's sails, lifted lightly, fell again with a faint slatting on spar and shroud. The sea, stirred by airs that wakened to immediately die again, became momentarily phosphorescent. Gazing toward the beam, where a trail of phosphorus moved slowly toward the far off shore, the mate spoke to the second mate.
"Whales about," he said.

Later they slept, turn and turn about, seated on the cabin skylight.
In the opalescent dawn the mate went forward, the luminous sea ashine from horizon to horizon. When he returned aft he and the second talked, their heads close together and their ears alert. His eyes bulgy with wonder the little negro waited upon them, the rings in his black ears catching the sun rays from the skylight above.

Breakfast done, the mates returned to the poop, while the negro went to the galley amidships, where the cook, a Chinaman as diminutive as the steward, mumbled pidgin curses at sailors who did not come to fetch their breakfasts.

The black arid the yellow man went to the fo'csle together, and looked within it. They jibbered to one another. Above their heads ropes drooped. Behind them blocks hung, idle above the sea. They saw the empty boat chocks, and returned to galley and pantry too alarmed for speech.
Toward noon, airs rising from the south slatted the canvas. The blue sea was rippled. Far spaced white caps appeared and faded immediately into the blue again.

The sailmaker and carpenter went to the Old Man's cabin, to sit silent upon the settee; their eyes, like the Old Man's eyes, on the lifebuoy that lay upon the empty bed. No breath audible from their unmoving breasts, they sat on; their heads bent above the crimson lettering of the ship's name.
The mates ate together again then went forward; the first, with a crook of his finger, bidding the steward to follow. The second beckoned the cook from his galley.

Obedient to the mates, at whom they stared from fascinated eyes, the cook and steward went to the top of the forward deck house.
Southerly airs were increasing; the fore sails bellying out; while the mainsails, laid aback, held the ship powerless to move.

Presently, at the mate's bidding, the cook pattered barefooted to the galley, while the negro, obeying motioned orders, stood with a rope in his hands at the bow of the teakwood gig. A little while after the cook had returned, his arms laden with biscuit and with beef, the gig was in the sea. The mates sheeted her small triangle of sail, to catch the south airs. Passing below the figurehead the mate stared up at it; but the figurehead seemed to ignore him.

Afternoon drawing to evening brought more wind to sway hanging ropes and belly drooping canvas. With the coming of night the sea murmured.

The lifebuoy in his hand, Elias came from his cabin, and, the sailmaker and carpenter at his heels, passed up to the poop. The buoy beside him, they left him seated on the skylight, and lashed the helm; then went down to the decks. Blocks and tackles groaned in the darkness. The main yards creaking round, the ship stole away, everything full, and the wind a point before the beam. Her helm lashed, the breeze as she desired it, she steered herself, unaided by the hand of man.
Wind came songfully, the sea replying with its many voices; well known stars observant of three old men who, their faces intermittently lit by passing phosphorus, their shadowy forms serene, sat upon the skylight.

A LONG boat came to Iquique, filled with sailors, who, jabbering of disaster, all told the same tale— the tale of an old ship trapped by a squall with her kites on. There had been but bare time to get the long boat adrift. They were the talk of the port—for a day.
Along fiery sea tops a gig ran through the night hours, the second mate at her yoke ropes, the mate beside him in the stern sheets.

At midnight, thick lips to the second's ear, the mate leaned over; his eyes toward two small forms asleep in the boat's bottom.
The second mate nodded his head in assent.
"Aye—they'd jibber," he said.

At dawn a steamer, south bound for Magellan, picked up the gig, half full of sea water; the mate and second mate alone, cold-faced.
"You from that ship that got capsized?" they were asked.
"Yes," came instant reply, then eyes meeting in swift understanding.
Weeks passed. Months sped by.

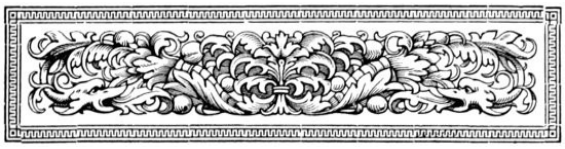
A large Cape Horn bound bark, a double topgallant-yarder with a donkey engine to hoist her topsails and to heave her anchor in, lay with her yards aback, hove to off an island to barter for fruit with the natives.

The head man of the islanders came to her cabin door, and there, bearing in his arms a piece of mossy upwashed flotsam from the sea, met her skipper.
The skipper, taking the flotsam upwashed by the sea upon the island beaches laid it on his saloon table.

Seeking for letters, for the name of a ship, he found faded, time-worn lettering that, lit by the sun from the skylight above, glowed with a colour of old blood.

"There's ,no port of registry," he murmured; then, calling to his mate said,
"Look here, she's lost! A missing ship, eh?"
They nodded their heads at one another.
"Gone—gone long ago," they said.

The sun shone upon the faded, edge frayed letters of the lifebuoy, and on the flower buds, mossy, about and below a lost ship's name —"Ich Dien."



On the Inside

by Frederick J. Jackson
Author of “For Business Reasons,” “Time and Tide,” etc.
from *Detective Story Magazine* - December 10, 1918

Lester Coffman was an adept at the gentle art of fourflushing.
Incidentally, he was a clerk in the safety-deposit vaults of a certain Los Angeles bank. His weekly salary was twenty dollars, and he managed to make quite a showing on this. Living in an eight-dollar-a-month room in the residence of a poor widow, he had his mail addressed to the Bachelor Club. His breakfasts and lunches were eaten in the cheapest of dairy lunches ; his dinners, at the club—whenever he was not invited out. Usually, however, he was a “filler-in” at dinner parties, for, through family connections, he had gained entry into fairly exclusive society circles in Los Angeles; and had become much in demand as a handy dancing man.

When society staged an amateur theatrical performance, it was Coffman who ran away with the honors. As an actor he possessed much talent. Only one thing kept him out of the motion picture game and the large salaries attached thereto—he did not photograph well. As one director put it, he screened like a piece of cheese. But he had the other attributes of the average actor; his tailor pointed to him as a model customer—a model of those to be kept off his books in the future.

Outside of like incidents, "Coffman had never done anything dishonest; that is, he had never been caught at it. But he had neither conscience nor scruples ; at heart he was a petty sneak thief, not being above transferring to his pockets the contents of some indulgent host’s humidor—when he was certain that he would not be detected.
Once, in a cloak room at a ball, he had brushed against a heavy weight in the overcoat hanging next to his. No one being in sight, he had investigated, drawing forth from the pocket of the other coat a heavy, black automatic pistol. For this lethal weapon he really had no use, but pocketed it on the impulse of the moment, and went home early. He still had the g”n in his room, intending to pawn it some day when he needed the money.

To the petty, empty world of society, Coffman was an exemplary young man, polite, polished and pleasingly entertaining. Even though the money-making men of their families thought him a bit frivolous, he stood well with numerous matrons. They liked him. Would one of them let him marry her daughter? Oh, dear, no ! But at the same time many of them were willing to lend a hand, should he be in need of it, in advancing his matrimonial campaign in other fields.

The society game to Coffman was a direct means to an end. He frankly intended to marry money. But he was particular. The girl who would become his wife, in addition to possessing wealth, must be more than passing fair. Any young woman with these qualifications would do. Love? He laughed at the word. Love to him was a mere

stage rolef Should occasion demand, he could act it to perfection; could give a better imitation of the thing that makes the world go 'round than the real thing itself.

Biding his time, he at last met a girl who came up to his worldly specifications. Her name was Marcelle Huntington. She liked Coffman, but was a bit worldly, too. The man she married must show more evidence of wealth than Coffman had ever done. From her seat on high, Destiny carefully scanned the situation, then stuck her tongue in her cheek as she impelled Coffman to fall desperately in love with Marcelle Huntington. It was a selfish love, however, for he was incapable of any other kind. No matter what agency or trick he employed to win her, the end would justify the means. Thus he reasoned.

To Coffman's warped, shriveled soul the sin of a crime did not lie in its commission but in its perpetrator's being caught. Discovery meant punishment. And the latter he construed not so much as meaning a term in the penitentiary as the inevitable social ostracism that would follow—the downfall from his precarious foothold in society, the loss of his chance to marry Marcelle Huntington and her wealth.

Coffman's hours in the bank were from nine to four-thirty. As he worked on the day following the evening that Marcelle Huntington had made it clear to him that money was an essential possession of a man who would marry her, Coffman's brain was stirred to unwonted activity. A scheme began to dawn on him.

Two keys were necessary to open a rent-box in* the vault. One was the key possessed by the renter of the box, the other a pass-key, a duplicate of which was carried by each clerk in the department. The common practice was for the patron to hand his or her key to the clerk. The latter would then unlock the box, using the master key as well as the patron's. The box would then be removed from its compartment and given into the hands of the renter. Sometimes the lid of the box would be opened right there and the contents removed or added to. Often, however, the patron would carry the box to a private room before opening it. Then, upon returning to the vault, the renter would hand the box back to the clerk, who would lock it into its compartment and return the patron's key.
Mr. Cunningham, a fat and prosperous broker, returned his extra-large deposit box to Coffman early that morning. Coffman locked the box into place, turning both keys; then removed Cunningham's key to give it back into his possession. But the broker had disappeared. His mind occupied by business affairs, he had forgotten his key. Coffman ran after him.

"Oh, Mr. Cunningham," he said, "you forgot your key."
"Bless me if I didn't !" exclaimed the other. "Let's see—that's about the sixth time I've forgotten it, isn't it? Good thing you're honest, young man, or I'd be a few thousand short some of these days through my carelessness."
Coffman smiled, too, as he walked back down the steps to the vault. But the smile was sardonic. Cunningham had called him honest. Cunningham was right—up to a certain point. Coffman was too wise to loot a single box, when the robbery would inevitably be traced to him. But Coffman was

thinking. Several times a day people forgot their keys—or, at least, the keys were out of their possession for a minute or so.

During his lunch hour that day, Coffman walked over to the east side of Main Street. He sought the place of business of a certain Mr. Isaacs. The •latter was a locksmith, on the" second floor of a dilapidated building. If the reputation of Mr. Isaacs was compared to a corkscrew, the cork-remover would show up like a plumb-line.

"Can you make keys from an impression?" inquired Coffman.
"That depends," returned Mr. Isaacs craftily.
"Upon what?"
"Upon the vax, mine boy, upon the vax you use."
"What kind of wax is the best?"
"Mine own special preparation. And ven you use it I tell no segrets." Mr. Isaacs winked knowingly.
"How much?"
"Fife dollars, in a special box." He showed the box to Coffman—a small, flat affair of tin, the lid working on a spring. It could easily be concealed in the palm of the hand, and the lid opened conveniently at a certain pressure.

"I'll take it," said Coffman, handing over the money. "And how much to make keys?"
"Vun dollar each, from the vax. Tventy-fife cents, if you bring the key. No segrets told on the vun-dollar kind."
As he walked back to the bank, Coffman surreptitiously practiced manipulating the box. An hour later he made two impressions of a key, when an old lady turned away to speak to a friend. It took him but a moment to press one side of the key into the plastic wax, then turn the key over and record its other side. As he locked the deposit box with his right hand, he dropped the small tin box into his breast pocket with his left. No one had seen him make the slightest suspicious movement. He made a mental note of the box number, repeating over and over again to himself, "Five nine four seven ! Five nine four seven !" Outwardly he was calm as he returned the key to the owner ; inwardly his heart was thumping at an unaccustomed pace.

After work that afternoon he again called upon Mr. Isaacs. Arriving at his home some time later, he affixed a small tag to the new key he had with him. Upon this tag he wrote 5947. Searching for a place to hide this incriminating key, he hit upon the scheme of tying it to a string and lowering it down a boarded-up flue in his room. Whistling to himself he entered the bathroom. That night he was to dine at the home of Marcelle Huntington. Two days later Cunningham again visited the vault, and Coffman seized an opportunity to press the broker's key in the wax. He had a duplicate key to Cunningham's box when he reached his room that evening. Stepping on a chair, he threaded the string through the hole in the key, and allowed the latter to drop down into the flue. The upper end of the cord was- attached to a nail. The process reminded him of his boyhood days when he had strung fish through their gills with a string and then dropped them back into the water. A month passed. Seventeen keys now hung down the flue, each key bearing a tag on which was written the number of the box it would open. In the meantime Coffman had still been ardently pursuing the heiress. But he was no closer to winning her than before.

Then one evening when he dropped in at the club, he found a letter from a firm of eastern attorneys. They notified him that upon the proper proofs of his identity he would be forwarded his share of the large estate left by one of his mother's sisters.

The next day he met a reporter with whom he was on friendly terms. He allowed the newspaper man to read the letter from the attorneys, and casually mentioned that his share of the estate would be over one hundred thousand dollars. Coffman full well knew the value of publicity given to his inheritance. It was better that Marcelle should read of it, than for him to inform her personally of his good fortune. He builded better than he knew, for the newspaper obtained his picture from a local photographer and ran it with a half-column article. The following week there was a noticeable in44 Detective Story Magazine crease in the amount of mail that he received at the club, said' increase being mostly due to invitations extended to him from mothers with marriageable daughters.

Fifteen hundred dollars was the size of the check he at last received from the east. Disappointed, he deposited it in an obscure bank in the northern outskirts of the business district. Judiciously spent, it might be enough to enable him to marry Miss Huntington. Then again, it might not, for Mareelle was an expensive young woman. With the double purpose of saving taxi fare and of impressing the girl, he invested in a second-hand roadster. For nine hundred dollars in cash he received a car that looked as though it must have cost twice the money.

The surplus melted rapidly away, like so much snow, under the sunshine of Mareelle Huntington's smile. Coffman began to worry. He easily saw that the money would not last long enough to accomplish his aim. Cannily, however, he had held onto his position in the bank.

For some weeks he had neglected making any more impressions of keys, having abandoned the plan for the contemplated robbery. For one thing, he would undoubtedly need an accomplice in order to keep his own reputation unspotted. And accomplices were dangerous; to be classed with edged tools and dynamite.

In order to obtain a proper garment for a masquerade ball, he paid a visit to a theatrical costumer. Running his eye over the list of available costumes, he rejected them. All 6f them were too hackneyed, an old story to him ; he had used every costume from Harlequin's to that of a foreign naval officer.

"Tell you what you might do," he suggested to the costumer. "How good an imitation of an old, dignified man can you turn me into?"
"Pretty near the real thing," was the reply. "Of course, you understand, this wig and diplomat's beard would look false under anything like close inspection in the daylight, but at night—
I defy any one to tell this beard from a real one under the electric lights, unless some one tried to snatch it off."

"Fine!" said Coffman. "I'll go in evening dress as a diplomat; red band aslant across my shirt front, pointed mustache and all that. I'll get a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, too. But,

say, how can I disguise my voice ?
That'll give me away."
"Try this." The costumer extended
something wrapped in waxed paper.
Coffman unwrapped a small solid
ball of soft rubber. Two holes ran
through it at bisecting angles.
"What do I do with it? Eat it?"
"No. Keep it in your mouth during
the masquerade, and it will change your
voice so that your own mother wouldn't
recognize it when you talk."
"All right. Thank you!"
After the costumer had shown him
how to adjust the wig, beard and mustache,
Coffman paid a deposit on them
and drove home.

Two hours he remained at the masquerade
the following evening, conversing
gravely with several of his friends
whom he was able to recognize despite
their masks and costumes. None recognized
him, however; not even Mareelle
Huntington, who had attended the ball
with another cavalier.

The startling thought of being his
own accomplice in robbing the safe-deposit
boxes suddenly occurred to him,
and he retired to the veranda to work
out the scheme in his mind. A little
later he looked at his watch. It was exactly
eleven o'clock. The safety-deposit
department remained open until
midnight every week day; this convenience
being a special feature of the institution.
He would begin the details
of his campaign this very night.
His identity at the ball was unknown
even to his hostess, each invited guest
having been mailed an engraved card
with no name on it, which was taken
up at the door by the butler when each
masquerader arrived. The guests were
to unmask at midnight. Going upstairs
to the cloak room, he obtained his coat
and hat. Then he drove home and
gained his room unobserved by any one.
Critically he examined his make-up in a
mirror, after turning on all the lights.
It was excellent, he reassured himself,
and would pass inspection anywhere at
night—with the exception of the waxed
mustache ends, which were slightly
exaggerated.

With a pair of scissors he
soon adjusted this. Then he removed
the crimson ribbon from his bosom.
Taking two large envelopes and stuffing
them with blank paper he slipped
them into his pocket with a small black
leatherette box, the original container
of a one-dollar safety razor, then went
out to his roadster. When he arrived
at the bank it was exactly eleven
thirty-five. The vaults would close in
twenty-five minutes. He went in
through the outer door and down the
stairs to the waiting room. This room
was separated from the vault office by
a row of inch thick polished steel bars.
Stepping up to the grilled wicket opening
onto a desk behind the bars, he
stated that he wished to lease a deposit
box. To add verisimilitude to his request,
he brought the two thick envelopes
and the black leatherette box into
view.

Two clerks were behind the desk, the
others having gone off duty as the slack
hours toward midnight drew near. One
of them extended an application blank,
with the request that it be filled in.
Coffman seated himself at a desk outside
the bars, dipped a pen in an inkwell
and started to write. Then he caught
himself hastily; he had started to use
the £en with his right hand. He
glanced up; neither of the clerks was
watching him. Shifting the pen to his
left hand, he filled in the blank. The

writing was an awful scrawl, but it was effectually disguised. He signed the name of Mortimer Dawson, with an out-of-town address. With money representing the price of a year's rental, he slid the paper back through the grill. Both clerks scrutinized it. One of them finally pulled the lever that swung open the gate in the bars.

Coffman passed through the gate. It clicked shut behind him.
"This way, sir," spoke a clerk, leading the way through the huge circular, tunnel-like doorway into the immense electric-lighted inner vault itself.
Coffman was forced to restrain himself, to call upon his gift as an actor to prevent himself from laughing.
Scores, hundreds of times each week day he himself led patrons into this vault. ..

The clerk used two keys to unlock a box, pulled it down from its steel compartment, and stood holding it.
Coffman lifted the covers of the box and gravely dropped into it the two trash-filled envelopes and the empty leatherette case.

The box was then slipped back into place by the clerk, who turned both keys and handed one of them to Coffman.
"Thank you ! Good night !" said the new patron, secure in the knowledge that his voice was unrecognizable. The rubber ball in his mouth caused his tones to be throaty and guttural.
During the noon hour the next day he walked around to the costumer's.
"I'm sorry," he informed the dealer, "that the wig and beard were stolen from me last night. After the dance I wrapped them into a parcel, which I left in my automobile when we entered a cafe. Coming out again an hour later, I found that some one had taken the lap robe and the parcel from the machine."
"In that case," replied the costumer, "your deposit is forfeited. I'm really sorry, too, that you lost the beard. It was a masterpiece that I cannot duplicate. And the deposit represented only the wholesale price."

"I'll put a want ad in the paper, offering a reward for the return of the articles taken with no questions asked," said Coffman. Which he proceeded to do, as a last touch to convince the costumer.
This expenditure of forty cents was wise, he thought ; although he could not help grinning when he looked at the automobile robe and beard reposing safely in the closet of his room.
Six weeks later the cord down the flue in his room had exactly forty*two keys strung on it. At least twice a week during this time he had visited the safe deposit vaults in the guise of Mortimer Dawson, invariably showing up between eleven o'clock and midnight. This was for the purpose of getting the vault clerks accustomed to his appearing late at night.

Then he learned that Marcelle Huntington and her mother were to spend a month in the mountains, at Twin Buttes Inn, some thirty miles from Los Angeles.
His annual vacation of one week was near at hand, and he arranged his plans accordingly. He would pass this week at Twin Buttes. Miss Huntington had accepted him as a very dear friend, nothing more; but with one week with her in the mountains he thought he could make better progress in his suit than in the city, where most of her time was taken up with a multitude of social obligations.

In the bank was a balance of one

hundred and ninety dollars, the remainder of his legacy. He drew it all out. For one hundred and ten dollars he purchased a second-hand motor cycle, twin-cylinder and with a free engine. An expert bicycle rider, with a knowledge of motors gained from experience with his roadster, he soon mastered the little two-wheeled machine. In fact. he left the roadster in a garage for nearly a month prior to his vacation, and devoted his leisure time to riding the motor cycle.

Marcelle Huntington had been at Twin Buttes for a fortnight when Coffman arrived there late on a Saturday afternoon. He drove up in his roadster; the motor cycle arrived by express the following Monday morning. The latter he stored in a barn about sixty yards behind the Inn. There was method in this.

Four delightful days were spent in the company of Marcelle. She was nicer to him than she had ever been before, and unfeignedly glad to explore the mountain roads in his motor car. Cavaliers were scarce at Twin Buttes; it was too quiet. For the latter reason her mother had selected it, thinking that Marcelle needed a month of absolute rest.

But all the time, Coffman's brain was seething with the details of the coup he had planned for Thursday night. Locked in one of his suit cases were the forty-two duplicate keys to the vault boxes, the wig and beard, an old suit of clothes, discarded years before, and the automatic pistol he had stolen from the overcoat in the .cloak room. On Thursday afternoon, while chatting to Marcelle Huntington and her mother, he began to complain bf a headache. He intended this alleged illness to be a part of his alibi, should one be necessary. After dinner that evening he did an admirable bit of acting, pretending to be so ill that Mrs. Huntington suggested that he retire early. This was what Coffman wanted. Apparently swayed by her solicitation, he went to his room at nine o'clock. Before leaving his friends, he stated that he was certain he. would be able to sleep soundly.

Carefully locking the door of his room, and hanging his hat on the doorknob lest some one attempt to peer through the keyhole, he proceeded to don the old suit of clothes. Next he gummed on the beard and mustache, then slicked back his hair and adjusted the wig. This done, and making certain that the keys and pistol were in his pockets, he turned out the light and noiselessly raised the window^ His room was on the ground floor, at the rear. After looking out through the darkness for several minutes to allow his eyes to become accustomed to the gloom and to be certain that no one was in the garden to witness his clandestine departure, he swung over the sill and dropped to the ground. Silently he made his way to the barn. Opening the door with much care, lest it creak on its hinges and cause a stable hand to investigate, he entered. Nothing was discernible in the intense blackness within the building. To his nostrils came the sweet scent of the hay in the loft above him, mingled with odors from the cows and horses. He listened for a while, then hearing nothing but the low crunch-crunch of animals feeding and the occasional stamp of a horse, he pressed the button of his flash light.

His motor cycle stood leaning against the wall. He had placed it in the barn, where he could get it out at night without being seen. If he had left it in the garage with his roadster the night attendant would be a damning witness against his alibi. Besides, he thought with a chuckle, the garage man would not have allowed him to take the machine out at all, for Mortimer Dawson was unknown at Twin Buttes.
The clutch was disengaged on the motor cycle. Silently he wheeled it out into the paved .back yard of the Inn, then closed the door of the barn. A quarter of a mile down the road he pushed the machine, then up to the brow of a little hill. At the top he mounted and coasted down the slope. Near the bottom he let in the clutch; the engine started, and he chugged away in the direction of Los Angeles.

At eleven o'clock Coffman dismounted in an alley half a block from the bank. Around the corner, on Main Street, shone the bright front of a pawnbroker's establishment. Walking over to Main Street, he entered at the sig; of three golden balls and purchased a dilapidated but stout suit case.
With this in his hand he strolled up the street to the Pacific Electric depot, where he lounged until the station clock announced eleven-thirty. Then he made his way directly to the bank, arriving there less than two minutes later.
The night watchman of the bank was in the habit of slipping across the street to a chop house at eleven-thirty each night. To consume a meal that would stay his appetite until morning took about twenty minutes of his time. Thus he would usually return about ten minutes before the clerks on duty in the safe-deposit vaults quit their work for the night.

There was no risk in his leaving, for he would lock the inner doors behind him. The door from the street opened into a small lobby. At the left-hand side of this were the stairs that descended to the deposit vaults. No one could enter the main lobby of the bank during the watchman's brief absence, and the safe-deposit vault was protected from robbers by the wall of heavy steel bars that separated it from the waiting room in the basement. Granted that some one managed to gain admittance to the vault itself, what could he do? Nothing. The deposit boxes were safe—absolutely. And the space behind the desk, where at least one person always remained, was studded with alarm buttons and levers. A slight movement of hand or foot would suffice to bring police reserves on a hurry-up call.

Lester Coffman knew all this, and it was his intimate knowledge that en48 Detective Story Magazine abled him to carry out his plans successfully.
A glance through the window of the chop house as he passed showed him the watchman just climbing onto a high stool before the lunch counter. Crossing the street, he entered the outer doors of the bank,snapped the latch so it would lock behind him, and descended to the basement.
The clerks knew Mortimer Dawson as a jovial, dignified old gentleman who was in the habit of coming late at night and who occasionally presented them with exceptionally good, cigars. His hurried scrawl of identification was a mere matter of form; the gate was opened for him even before he finished penning his signature. To-night he carried a suit case, which was unusual, but they thought nothing of it. He had an

out-of-town address and was probably on his way home.

Placing the suit case on the floor about eight feet in front of the desk counter, he reached into his inside coat pocket and drew forth an envelope. From this he carefully removed a ball of cotton.

"I have here," he said to the clerks, "the famous black diamond of the Danube. You have doubtless heard of it and its bloody history in Vienna. I picked it up at a bargain—forty thousand dollars. Would you care to see it before I place it in my box?"
The prospect of gazing at a fortythousand-dollar gem was such a lure that the clerk came from behind the counter. The other was already standing beside Mr. Dawson.

To him the latter passed the roll of cotton.
"Unwrap it," he said.
Heads close together, the clerks grinned feebly when the unrolled cotton exposed nothing more than a dried prune. Mr. Dawson was not grinning, however, when they looked at him. Instead, he was regarding them coldly from behind a wicked-looking black automatic, held waist high.

"Raise your hands!" he ordered melodramatically. "That's fine ! Now turn around and walk to the door of room six."
This private room for the use of patrons in going over the contents of their deposit boxes was, perhaps, six feet by eight in size. Inside of it were two chairs an electric-light globe on the wall, and a small table. Nothing more except the stationery, pens and ink on the table.

"Both of you get inside!" requested Mr. Dawson, turning the request into a command with a menacing forward movement of the gun.
The desk clerk and the vault clerk stepped within the doorway.
"Hand over your pass-key !" was the order to the vault clerk.
"Sure, here it is," replied-the latter, with a nervous laugh ; "but what do you expect to do with it? If you think you can get into the deposit boxes* you're crazy !"
"That's it ! I'm as crazy as a loon," admitted Mr. Dawson cheerfully.
"Keep that in mind in case you should feel like raising an alarm. One yell from either of you, or any disturbance, and I'll start shooting through the door. Understand ?"

They did. But they were comforted by the thought that this marauder would not get any loot.
Outside the closed door of the private room, the thief himself, who will again be known as Coffman, was losing no time. Bracing a chair beneath the doorknob of room number six, he ran to his suit case, grabbed it up and hurried into the vault, where he spread the traveling bag wide open on the floor. Swiftly he worked fitting keys to the boxes. As he knew the location of each box in the vault as well as a telephone operator knows each number on a call board, he was able to work fast. It was sirpply a matter of reading the number attached to a key, running to the box and opening it. Long practice had made him perfect at rapidly inserting and turning keys.

The contents of each deposit box were dumped out and given a hasty sorting. Money, bonds, jewelry were

dropped into the suit case. All jewel boxes were emptied of their valuables —the boxes themselves would take up too much room. The suit case was full when he had used all but seven of the duplicate keys. He looked at his watch. It was eleven-forty-six. He would have to hurry away before the watchman returned. Throwing the keys in on top of the valuables, he locked the suit case, snatched it up and hastened from the' vault. From behind the counter he worked the lever that opened the gateway in the steel barrier, then hurried out and slammed the gate back onto its automatic lock. Racing up the stairs, he opened the door to the street. A man stood on the sidewalk, looking directly into the doorway as Coffman stepped out.

"Vault closed?" asked the stranger.
"It isn't twelve yet."
"It's closed," Coffman replied casually, losing his momentary qualm of fear as he swung the door shut behind him and heard the latch snap into place.
"Too bad you were late," he continued, "but they generally close a little before midnight."
"Thank you," said the other, and started walking away.

Coffman took the opposite direction, heading for the alley in which he had left* his motor cycle. Over his shoulder, as he turned the comer, he saw the watchman come out of the chop house and step off the curb toward the bank. This had the effect of making Coffman quicken his steps. Reaching the machine, he hastily strapped the suit case on the luggage rack over the rear wheel, then started the engine. Riding the length of the alley, he turned into a street and started west. Half a block in this direction, and he headed the motor cycle north.

Broadway, in Los Angeles, is probably the most deserted main thoroughfare of any city of its size in the United States at midnight. The only bright spot Coffman saw was at First Street, across from the office of a morning newspaper. Half a block west from this lay the police station. Taking the most logical and direct way out of town, Coffman was heading for the Broadway tunnel. An officer stood on the bright corner. Coffman rode slowly and looked straight ahead. The patrolman paid no attention to him. Once across First Street, however, Coffman spe.d up a little, to mount the slope leading up past the Hall of Records and the Court House to the tunnel.

Halfway up the hill, he heard the clamor of an automobile gong behind him. He looked back. A large machine, filled with men, was turning out of First Street and heading south on Broadway. Coffman smiled to himself, as the big car roared away in the opposite direction. The alarm had already been turned in; the detectives were hurrying to the scene of the robbery. As he passed through the tunnel, Coffman began to review the plans he had so thoroughly worked out in advance.

The sickening realization dawned on him that he had neglected one small thing; namely, to disguise with mud the license number of his motor cycle. Almost in a- panic he bumped across the car tracks on Temple Street and opened the throttle. At this time of night there would be no speed cops in Sonoratown. The warm night air was just enough to arouse his faculties to the full as he rode at a thirty-five-mile clip. Suppose the policeman

had noted the license number of the motor cycle? Some one else, too, might have noticed the suit case strapped on behind the seat ; it was big enough to attract attention. To Coffman's fearful imagination it suddenly loomed up as large as a bale of hay. And the license number was woefully easy to remember. A simple sequence of three figures : six-seven-eight. On the level boulevards of San Fernando Valley, he regained control of himself and began to figure out a way to destroy every bit of evidence that might be against him. When he had reached the isolation of a mountain road, he stopped to dispose of the automatic pistol by throwing it far into a gulley filled with poison oaks. Likewise the duplicate keys, which he opened the suit case to obtain.

Half a mile from Twin Buttes Inn he stopped again, this time at a spot where the stony mountain road lay directly above a riotous creek. Below this particular place the bed of the creek dropped suddenly to a great depth. In the dryest of seasons this pool was a refuge for big trout. Never was there less than twenty feet of water in it. Removing the suit case from the motor cycle, Coffman wheeled the machine to the edge of the road and let it topple over. A huge splash, and it sank into the unfathomable water. Later he would report to the owner of the Inn that the motor cycle had been stolen from the barn. With a feeling of security he picked up the suit case and walked toward the Inn.

He had walked half the distance when he turned off the road and struck through the brush, using his flash light to enable him to pick a path. In a group of rocks at the far end of the extensive orchard belonging to the Inn, he stopped. Secure from interruption, he opened the suit case, flashed the light into it and gloatingly made a partial mental inventory of the plunder. A little later he hid the case by burying it among the rocks and earth. Then he cut through the orchard and climbed in the window of his room unseen. Closing the window behind him and pulling down the shade, he switched on the light. Of his wig, beard and old clothes he made a bundle, wrapping them in a newspaper. After rumpling his hair to give the appearance of a person just awakened from a sound sleep, he donned a bath robe and walked down the hall to the office. There he chatted for a moment with the night clerk, saying that he had been feeling ill before retiring, but had awakened to find his headache gone. Then he left a call for seven o'clock and went to bed to snatch what sleep he could. When he was dressing, after a hasty shave and bath later in the morning, he noticed a large fire in the back yard of the Inn. A huge pile of leaves, straw and old papers was being burned. With the newspaper package under his arm, he went out through the rear entrance. As he walked past the fire he dropped the old clothes and false hair into the heart of the flames.

Relieved, he returned to the Inn and entered the dining room, where he found Mrs. Huntington and Marcelle giving their breakfast order to the waiter. At Mrs. Huntington's invitation, he joined them.

"I trust that you are feeling better this morning?" she inquired, when he had taken a seat.
"Yes, thank you, I am. Slept like a top until about two this morning,

when I awoke feeling fine. Went out
and left a call with the night clerk before
going back to sleep. Poor accommodations
here; no telephones in
the rooms."
"When are you expected back at the
bank?" she asked. "With your fine
inheritance I should think that you
would go into business for yourself."
"Yes, I'm thinking of doing that. But
I like the banking business and will stay
in it until I decide what to do. I am
returning Sunday night."
"I'm sorry/' murmured Marcelle.
"That gives you only two more days.
I've enjoyed my delightful drives with
you."
"I'll run up for the week-ends until
you return to town," he promised, suddenly
exhilarated by the look he had
caught in her eyes.

But the light in Marcelle's eyes was
a false one,' the kind that experienced
flirts since the world began have been
able to command at will to the undoing
of their admirers. Marcelle had no
love for Coffman, but his reputed one
hundred thousand dollars was something
that appealed to her callous heart.
It seemed that Coffman was the best
match in sight. Then, too, she was
climbing up under the eaves of thirty,
and v/as beginning to lose out to the
debutantes.

However, it was all jn the scheme of
things, and Coffman was deliriously
happy when he started to drive back
to the city on Sunday night with Marcelle's
kisses still warm on his lips, and
the measure of her ring finger in his
pocket.

The details of the vault robbery had
been spread broadcast in the press of
the land. Coffman felt secure; the authorities
were looking for a much older
man. The mystery of how he had been
able to unlock the boxes was still unsolved.
Eastern detectives were work-'
ing on the theory that some employee
of the firm that had manufactured the
deposit boxes had been able to make
numbered duplicate keys, and had gone
west after a lapse of years, to accomplish
the theft.

Coffman had reason to feel secure.
He resumed his duties in the vault as
though nothing had happened, and
speculated with the rest of the clerks as
to how deeply laid the plan had been.
He agreed with them that the numerous
visits of Mortimer Dawson to the
vault had been for the purpose of ascertaining
the exact position of each box
he intended to rifle, in order to work
according to a fixed program. Thus
he had evidently been able to work fast
in the limited time at his disposal.
At noon on Monday Coffman went to
an exclusive jewelry store and purchased
for ten dollars a plain gold
signet ring to grace his own little finger,
which was the same" ring-size as Marcelle's
third finger. The engraving was
done during the afternoon, and the ring
was ready for him when he called for
it at four-thirty. The jewelry salesman,
perhaps thinking that Coffman
wished to wear the ring immediately,
brought it to him without a box. Coffman
asked for one.

"Certainly, sir," the salesman answered.
"A pink one, please," said Coffman.
"This is a present to one of my sisters,"
he added boldly.
Pink was Marcelle's favorite color.
The clerk brought a small pink-velvet
box, lined with white satin. He
placed the ring in it.
"Thank you," said Coffman, and

went out of the store.

Before going to work on the following Saturday morning, Coffman packed his suit case for the week-end and took it downtown with him, leaving it in the machine when he parked the roadster for the day in a near-by auto station. After finishing work at the bank, all departments of which closed at noon on Saturday, he motored directly to Twin Buttes Inn.

The afternoon was spent with Marcelle. In the evening he dined with her and Mrs. Huntington. Later, when the tables had been cleared from the dining room, there would be a dance.
When both women retired to their room for a time after dinner, Coffman welcomed the opportunity. Obtaining his flash light from his suit case, he departed from the Inn by the rear entrance and hastened through the orchard to where he had hidden the loot.
From among the valuables he selected a diamond solitaire, with a conventional engagement-ring setting. The stone was a magnificent one, and the ring would be a perfect fit for Marcelle's finger. Rich, effulgent, the splendor of the diamond burned in the light of the electric torch as he turned the ring at various angles to catch the scintillation from each facet. Entirely worthy of Marcelle, he thought in satisfaction as he pocketed the gem and prepared to return to the Inn.

Back again in his room, he washed his hands and brushed all traces of soil from his shoes and apparel, then smiled as he fitted the ring into the pink velvet box.
It would be the last necessary touch, he fancied—this costly solitaire in a box from Cragen's. Cragen's! A name to conjure with. In the west it represented everything that a certain name stands for in the east.

Two hours later, when she returned with Coffman from the veranda, Marcelle announced the engagement, showing the ring to her mother with an air that seemed to say "I told you so!"
They breakfasted at ten, all three of them. Marcelle held up her left hand to show the ring to the best advantage.
"Do you know," she said, "I haven't taken it off since you placed it on my finger."
Nor did she remove it during the day, which she passed with Coffman in a long ride over the mountains.
Late that night he returned to Los Angeles. Marcelle and her mother were to leave Twin Butt s the next day.
On the following afternoon, when he left the bank, Coffman telephoned to his fiancee. To his surprise she announced that she had an engagement for the evening and would be unable to see him.
"To-morrow night, then?" he inquired.
"No, I think not." There was a hint of chill in her voice.
Troubled, he determined to drive to Twin Buttes that night and bring the stolen valuables into the city. His intention, after that, was to lock the suit case into a small trunk and place the latter in storage.
Leaving the city a little after seventhirty, he arrived in the vicinity of the Inn before nine o'clock. A quarter of a mile from the hostelry he ran the machine off to one side of the road. Killing the engine, he locked the magneto and made his way through the brush to where he had hidden the plunder among the rocks. Fifteen minutes later he returned to the roadster and dropped the suit case onto the front

seat.

Then he lit a cigarette. His mind was not clear as to the best course of action regarding the motor cycle, which he had neglected to inform the proprietor of the Inn had been stolen from the barn. He had slipped up also in forgetting to disguise the license number. It still troubled him. If suspicion were directed toward him, he was certain it would be through his carelessness about that one small part of his plan on the night of the robbery.
Nearly all criminals are caught, he knew, through some forgotten part of a carefully worked-out program. But the more he thought it over the easier he began to feel in his mind. The motor cycle, pshaw ! He would immediately return to Los Angeles, and from there write to the inn, giving instructions for the machine supposed to be in the barn to be shipped to him by express. The proprietor would inform him that the motor cyde was not in the barn. Perhaps the hotel man would settle with him, perhaps not. In any event he was safe from detection.

As he motored back to Los Angeles his mind was free, except for the fact that he could not account for Marcelle's sudden coldness toward him. But he comforted himself with the thought that she was taken up with previous social engagements.

At ten forty-five he left his .roadster in the garage across the street from the place he" called home. Suit case in hand, he walked over to the house, inserted his latchkey and opened the front door. As he mounted the stairs to the second floor he felt a premonition that something was wrong. But ^e shook off the feeling with an inward laugh.

His room was dark as he opened the door. While he reached along the wall, feeling for the light switch, he heard the door close behind him. For a moment he fancied it must have been caused by the draft from the open window. Then he turned on the light.
Two men were in the room—big, burly men whom he instinctively disliked and feared. One stood behind him. It was he who had closed the door. - The other sat on the edge of the bed. He arose to his feet as the light went on.
“What are you doing in my room?” demanded Coffman heatedly. He knew, though, all too well the purpose of the visit.
One of them pulled a paper from his pocket. A search warrant, he carefully explained.
Coffman tried to bluff, but knew it was useless.
The suit case was opened by thp detectives.
“I’m caught, all right,” admitted Coffman, white-lipped. “But how? The motor cycle!”
“Motor cycle ? Rats !” exclaimed one of the officers. “We know nothing about a motor cycle. But you pulled a boner in presenting stolen jewelry to a woman—even if the ring seemed like any other expensive engagement ring. I guess you didn’t take a good look at the inside of it before you gave it to her.”
“What ? No, I guess I didn’t look inside,” muttered Coffman dazedly. “I examined it with a flash light.”
“Oh, you flash light!” The other chuckled. “There was some fine engraving inside the ring. It belonged to Miss Huntington’s aunt, given that lady long ago by her fiance. The girl took it off to show it to her relative, and that spilled the beans.”

In the Down-Country

By G. B. Lancaster
from *Everybody's Magazine*, July-Dec. 1905

Editor's Note. —This story of Mr. Lancaster's, the first of several to appear in successive numbers of this magazine, introduces to the public a new and powerful author, whose field is a country hitherto almost unknown in fiction. They are tales of New Zealand sheep-shearers and cattlemen, for whose crude strength Mr. Lancaster has keen feeling, and whose tragic struggles among the hardships and the terrors of their wilderness solitude he describes with remarkable force and vividness.

"IT 'LL be jest an or'nary sod whare." *
"But you made it, dearest."
"And you won't have no folk anywheres near yer."
"I'll have you."
" 'Fraid I'm jest an or'nary sort of chap, Liza."

Then she put her arms round him, and told him what he was among men, exactly as all lovers have told all lovers since love began. But Lavel drew her head back and looked at her, troubled, and marveling that so small and rare a thing could in sooth be his very own.
"Yer don't know the life of a woman out back. Are yer sure yer won't p'r'aps be sorry—after?"
"Not unless—you forget to love me."
"Never. I'll never do that, Liza."
He kissed her as a man unaccustomed to tenderness, and went away to ride through the noise of the streets, through the silence of range and level and barren down to the home that he had built her. It stood on a newleased government block, and Franklin had helped in the making, as Franklin had helped Lavel in all things since they two first were mates.
At earliest hearing Franklin had hated this unknown girl who was to break the tie between them.
In learning more he began to fear her.
Liza was bred in the town, and nursed on the talk of the dressmaking rooms at a big shop. Lavel was bred in the back-country, and had taken his teaching from men in bush-town ships, and on the roads. The very trickwords of lip and brain which foreshadow the whole must of necessity be separate languages
* A Maori house.

in the man and the woman. And this was but as the beginning. A man who would live on the land needs a helpmate in kind: sturdy, expecting little, ready always and un complainingly to bear up her end of the burden. And the burden will be heavy.
Wherefore Franklin pulled his beard and growled while they wrought at the tworoomed whare until it stood up in all its ugliness among the tussock hills.
"Gie her comforts for the Lord's sake," he said then. "A wife's a cheepin' thing else, an' she'll dither the life out o' ye. But I jalouse she wull dae that onyvvays."
And just then Liza, walking with a new consciousness among the workroom girls, blushed at their twitter of lace-trimmings and underskirts and all else that belongs by right to a bride, and thanked God dumbly for love.
But Franklin could not guess at this, and it was for Lavel's sake alone that a sheetiron lean-to was sloped to the hinder end of the whare, and a handful of tiger-lilies stuck in a scarified patch of soil. Then Lavel rested from his labor in a florid con tent, saying:
"Reckon that's good enough for the Prin cess o' Wales. Now we'll wade in at the fencin', for I must hev the stockin' done wi'

by next month. S'elp me bob, but it's fair rotten to hev to take the inside o' a week gittin' spliced."

It was into the golden land of love and desire that he brought Liza home through the sunsetting. For the scarped ranges and the marshes were passed and all the world lay forward in a broad flooded yellow on tussock slopes and plumes of waving snow-grass.

The little squat whare shared in the benedic tion, and a skylark sent them welcome down from God's gate. Liza laid her cheek to the rough, unplaned door, and named her home " Heaven-on-Earth," speaking very softly, yet not so softly but that Lavel heard.

"You've got some ratty ideas, old girl," he said. But he put his arm about her closely as they went in together.

Franklin rode over on the Sunday. And he found that Lavel had married a child with a cotton frock and eyes made glorious by a something that he did not understand, and wrists no bigger than the waist of his thumb. Lavel showed them in half-pride and halfderision,

and Liza's sweet lip drooped.

"I can work," she said eagerly. "Truly I can. I am so strong—and there is very much to do."

"Aye," said Franklin, looking down on her gravely. "There is much tae dae."

"It is so wonderful that I should be allowed to help him." This very shyly. "He is so good to me. You can never guess how good he is—for you are not his wife."

"I've been regruttin' that a' these years," said Franklin solemnly; "but, ye see, he didna ask me."

Then they laughed together until Liza ran into the house in a small fury. But she waved a cup at them in forgiveness when they passed the kitchen window, and Franklin growled through his beard:

"She's a bonny bit thing, Lavel mon. Think ye ye hae dune richt tae bring her oot tae this?"

"Pooh," said Lavel, "she'll be happy enough. A feller can't make this sort of thing pay without a wife, you know. And she's dead gone on me. Macklin sent over those Leicesters yesterday. Come along down to the paddock an' have a look at them."

"Aye," said Franklin, underbreath, "she's a bonny bit thing, but I doot she's the mate for ye, ma lad."

For if Franklin knew the good in Lavel he knew distinctly the evil too.

There was a whole new life calling for Liza, and she went to the learning bravely. It was play at first, with Lavel to carry the heavy buckets and tins, and to help in the washingup at nights. But this failed to attract him presently, and the outside work taxed his mental and physical strength, and began to rub his temper. Liza struggled over strange dishes that Lavel refused to eat, and learned to milk the cows, and feed the pigs, and to fill the kettles without flooding the stove-place. For the work of a woman on the land is always that of a man. It tried her severely; and the long evenings that closed the hard days were cruelly dull, with Lavel falling asleep over his pipe, and the clucking wind arguing through the door-latch with the busy clock on the mantel-shelf.

It was in the fourth week that she first spoke to him in anger. It was in the seventh week that he first swore at her. They made that up; he with uncouth regret, she with tears that washed some of the gold out of life for always.

Then Franklin came. He noticed the swelled eyelids, and the loss of spring in the little thin figure; and he called Lavel to ac count sharply, even savagely, down by the pigsties among the manuka. Lavel 's low brows met in a scowl.

"She played up, an' I guv it to her straight. An' I'll do it agin when she wants it. Don't you come gassin' about my business that way, Franklin, for I'm blowed if I'll stand it."

And by this it was intimated that Lavel was ashamed, and afraid to show it.

This was a strait life for the two out on the

tussock hills, and one that demanded and took all they could give. But they gave apart, not knowing, and this was unwise, for it hurt both more than was necessary.

Liza lost flesh and spirit, and the loneliness of the many hours ate into her like a canker. Lavel tramped at the plow-tail, flayed his fingers over the straining of wires, sunk postholes,
and built hurdles. And the eternal
dread that sufficient m6ney might not always be forthcoming kept him awake through the nights.

Franklin came very often, for Lavel wearied for one of his kind to speak with. He forgot that the only woman within twenty miles lived at the end of a bridle-track, and Liza could not ride. He forgot, also, the little ten der pettings that a woman craves; and so it came about that Liza broke her heart daily, never guessing that Lavel was hiding from her all that he considered a man's trouble. She did not know of the seed-land that had gone before the wind even to the bottom of the plowing, of the cattle that broke out and died of tutu down on the river-bed, of the merinos that got foot-rot in the swamp. But the constant pressing of this burden weighted Lavel beyond his strength, and, being quite an ordinary man, he made himself consistently objectionable in consequence.

Liza had learned little refinements in the workrooms; and so it fell that by degrees the filthiness of the cow-house in rain, the smell of Lavel's boots when he came from the yards, even the hang of his coat on the shoulders that were growing bowed, were of offense to her. The tussock that blew to west, to east, to southward on the bleak hills was a thing, merciless and all-abiding, to hold her from the life she had known and loved.

It was before Franklin one day that Lavel railed unguarded because Liza had forgotten to feed the calf. And that Franklin, awk ward and troubled, should plead for her clumsily, was gall beyond anything that Liza had been called to bear yet.

"He's quite right," she said, with her head up. "I didn't ought to forget."

Then she went out, and beat her hands wildly on the staring blank wall that she had named "Heaven-on-Earth," and cast herself down in the hollow of the manuka hill with all love shaken out of her by that struggle against the unalterable which comes to most men and women soon or late, and which—while it lasts—makes life rather more terrible than it is meant to be.

Franklin was fighting a devil on his own account these days, and his pipe lost flavor. The changes that flecked Liza's voice; the scent she always used ; the quaint upstanding wave of hair on the left temple—over well he knew them. But belief in his strength of will drove him back to her week by week, until autumn chilled to winter with threaten ing of the snow that would presently cut the sod whare off from all the world. Then it would be that Lavel and Liza must go back to the state of the first man and his wife, with none to come between. Franklin feared what this might mean when he rode through the bleak wind one Sunday and found Liza alone by the fire.

"I'll make you some tea," she said dully. "George is out round the sheep. He won't be in for hours, I expect."

She moved through the room that she had made dainty with sewed curtains, and shining tinware, and books; and Franklin watched her under his hand.

"Ye're lukin' fair an' peeked, lassie. This weather no suits ye, maybe?"

"It's not the weather," said Liza, and laughed uncertainly. For her nerves were on tension beyond her knowing.

She moved the kettle in the red of the fire light, and Franklin cried out at the shapely seamstress's fingers that were chapped to bleeding and blackened with work.

"Eh, lassie! What hae ye dune tae yer honds? Swelled an' bluidy—the saft bit fingers! Ye'll no' be pullin' aff that ring the noo."

"No, I suppose not," she said. And then constraint fell from her.
" Why did you tell me that ? Do you think I don't know? Do you think I don't know I can't pull it off? Never! Never! So long as we both shall live. O God, I can't bear it! What shall I do? What shall I do? "
She clung with both hands to the breast of his coat, and in the mad words that she said Franklin fancied she was stripping her whole soul bare to him. The quick tones carried him down on the rush, and the nearness of her piteous mouth was more torture than is healthful for any man.
"You were his mate once. Was ever he cruel to you ? But I am his wife. He can do what he likes to me. Oh! if you had a wife, would you hit her—and call her names ?"
"What? Na—he wudna strike ve."
"He did! He did! Twice. Once I left the gate open and boxed some sheep. Once I was tired, and answered him back. And he'll do it again. I know he will. Oh ! why doesn't he love me as he used to?"
This should have cleared the position to Franklin's understanding. It did not, for other forces were at work.
"Take me away." This was not any more Liza, the dressmaker, with her careful man nerisms, but a woman caught in a power too strong for her. "I'll kill him if I stop here. I'm learnin' to hate him now. Oh, if you care for me, take me away! "
"If I care!" He kept his eyes from her because that touch on his breast was quite all that he could bear. " Fine ye ken that I care. Tak' yer bit honds aff me, lassie, or I'll be showin' ye that I—care tae much."
"Do you? Do you care? He doesn't. He never will. Every day and every night I know that he never will. If I could die "
"God hae maircy—ma lassie—ma ain lassie! Whatcanldae? What can I dae?"
Liza had whipped herself into pure mad ness. And because Franklin did not know that the mood would pass, his thews were being tested severely.
" Take me away ! Take me where he can't find me! You're strong. You wouldn't let him have me back "
"He's ma mate. He is ma mate, I tell ye. I canna dae him wrang. Ye dinna ken what ye say. He is ma mate."
"Don't I know? Don't I?" Her hands gripped him closer. " Oh, don't let us be shut up here together—just him an' me!"
Franklin cried out inarticulately, and al most his strength went from him. But he did not move. He stared blindly at the wall, and two memories came to him in great light ning flashes: Lavel standing just there with a dripping brush, his eager face and fair hair all splattered with whitewash; Lavel, in pride and a half-comic tenderness, arranging the next room, and puzzling over the hang of a curtain. He pushed Liza away.
"Dinna tempt me," he said. "For the luve o' God, dinna tempt me! He's hurtin' ye sair, an' I luve ye abune a'. But I canna help ye. I canna."
He dropped his head on the mantel-shelf, and groaned like a wounded elephant; and presently he heard her crying, as a man cries, in great dry sobs that shake the soul.
He swung round.
"Liza!" he said, and put his honor behind him when he crossed the room to take her up in his arms.
Through the window above her bent head he saw Lavel riding home across the snowgrass, and his hands fell away as they touched her. There was a silence that drew together all known agony for one man; but Franklin's voice was quite level when he spoke.
' ' Rise ye oop, lassie. Here's yer mon come hame. He does luve ye richt weel, though I'll no' say he's ower gleg in the showin' o't. But he has a mony things tae trouble him, an' ye maun forgie, an' luve him yet. Ye air ay the ane lassie for him. I'll no' wait tae see him, I'm thinkin'. Gude-by—Liza."
Out in the windy dusk he twisted in the saddle, looking back to the four-square hut

with its litter of yards and straw-thatched sheds. Past the wire fence running down where the young trees bent from the south he saw Lavel go in and shut the house door behind. Then he turned, pressing his eyes with his hands, and his horse went home unguided.

*

He carried a very complete heartache north with him that week, forgetting Liza every hour of the twenty-four because it was his duty, and rolling on his bed of nights in a cold fear lest Liza had run away from Lavel into the show of the ranges.

In the late autumn the will of the man he served sent him again to the down-country. He came with a draft of cattle, and at one of the stages they told him to make Lavel's stock-yards at the day's ending. He had not heard Lavel's name since he took that old trail last year, but his tongue dried in his mouth when he would have asked concern ing Lavel's belongings. And through the long day that brought him over the last hill at sunset it is probable that Franklin paid fully for the sin of loving without the law. The whare, and the young trees, and the slip-rails where the cows stood lowing were swamped in the blood-red that ran out of the western sky. The window-panes flared blank, and the awful restlessness of that love which may not be satisfied made the work of round ing and yarding the mob sheer torture.

Lavel came out before the last rails were up. He was unskilful of words as in other days, but he shook hands with a mate's grip.

"It's good ter see yer agin, old man," he said. "Come along in."

Franklin followed, in deadly terror because the fear that had tortured him so long was come to the clearing. He uncovered on the threshold, and his eyes saw black. Was she there? Liza—Liza—Lavel pushed open the door of the inner room, and crossed the sill. Franklin stood still; the passion in him shook him by waves, and his throat ached. Then it came to him like the blare of a trumpet that sin, honor, blood-brotherhood between man and man are nothing beside the love of a man for a woman. He had left her—but he had come back. It was Lavel speaking behind the half-closed door, but Franklin heard only the answer.

"Franklin? Why, I thought—ah, George, just see how he's curling up his little toes! The darling—darling ! "

" Hillo, sonny ! Hillo, hillo! Scratch us up a good tea, Liz, will you? An' gimme the kid. I want ter show "

"George! Don't you dare take him till I get some more clothes on to him! He'd catch his death! What? Yes, I've got plenty for tea, dear, and if it's good enough for you it's good enough for Franklin. Look! He can almost pull my hair! Oh, baby—baby !"

"And we can put him up for the night, old girl? Franklin "

"Oh, bother Franklin!" said Liza. "All right, dear; yes, if you want him. There! go to your daddy, my sweetheart. Keep the shawl well round his head, George, and don't let the light get in his eyes. Tell Franklin I'll be out in a minute."

And Lavel went back to tell it.

Ananias Ltd.

By Elizabeth Dudley
from *Black Mask* - December 1921

I

THERE are thousands of tons of gold locked up in God's eternal mountains which men will never see nor spend. But

that fact doesn't keep them from trying.
There is something about yellow
metal which turns heads,
transforms morals and grows devils
in the soil of saints. Merely an instance
of this is the case of the
Hectopus mine, with which I, as a
Post Office Inspector, was well acquainted
for the space of a month.
I had been called into the case on a
complaint made by Jedidiah Quinot,
of Boston, an esteemed gentleman of
his community, who shed real tears,
nearly wore out his glasses in polishings
and blew his nose prodigiously
as he told me the story of his suspicions
concerning his harum-scarum
nephew—one Herbert Cryder, whom
he feared had not only hopelessly involved
himself but disgraced the
family in a gold mine speculation.
After I had called upon Cryder, a
few days later, I did not blame the
old gentleman for his suspicions. If
there ever was an outfit which bore
all the marks of a fraud it was this
Hectopus mine concern. As usual, it
was quartered in the most expensive
office building in the city, and the boss
himself was twice as hard to see as
the President of the United States.
Inside the usual railing, with a boy at
the gate, were a dozen stenographers
copying names out of telephone directories
or pages out of books
—anything to keep them busy.
In a room opening off that was
Dick Garrity, one of the shrewdest
mine swindlers in America, with his
name brazenly on the door and the
title of "General Manager." In the
front office—when I finally got there
—was the most impressive and expensive
set of mahogany office
furniture I have ever seen, and behind
the big desk in the center of the room
a clean-cut chap of about thirty,
bronzed, smiling, devil-may-care and
a most disarming way of waving a
visitor to a chair and forcing him to
take two cigars at once.
And this was Herbert Cryder, a
disgrace to his family, a worry to his
old friends, suspected by the Government
of being a thief, facing the
world and Atlanta prison not only
with a smile but with a laugh that
refused to stay bottled.
I had met many crooks but this
was a new type, so new that I am
afraid I made a poor job of my role
as a prospective investor. As to that
I do not know to this day whether
he really suspected my errand or
whether it was only a part of his
plan when he laughed at my proposal
to invest a few thousand dollars in
the stock of the Hectopus Mining and
Exploration Co., slapped me on the
back and literally pushed me out into
the hall with a third cigar clutched in
my hand.
Whatever he thought, he had left
me no recourse but to go back to old
Jedidiah with such information as I
had been able to pick up on the outside,
and the two of us spent the
evening going over the cards we held
the young scapegrace held in his.
That he was the most brazen young
swindler outside a penitentiary, I was
convinced. Jedidiah did not have to
tell me that. Those girls in his outer
office—twelve of them busy when
there was not work enough for two
—were the plainest sort of bait for
the unwary. Dick Garrity, I knew,
would be lost with an honest concern
; he knew so much about mining
that he wouldn't accept a gold piece
in change at a bank. Then that mahogany
office ; it was far too gorgeous
to be true. And as a crowning piece
of effrontery, on the wall just behind

Cryder's chair, was a picture—a painting at that—of an Indian spearing a fish from a little platform above a raging torrent. I had not noticed what kind of fish it was, but to me it looked like a sucker and I gasped almost aloud as I grasped the daring nerve of the laughing man who had placed it there.

Herbert Cryder, I had found out, came of one of the best families in New England. Mixed in his blood somewhere must have been a strong element of the old-time whalers or sea captains of some sort because even as a boy he had been a daring, adventurous young devil. The more conservative expressed the opinion that it was God's mercy that his parents were dead, and even those who were still on good terms with him socially threw up their hands when his name was mentioned in casual conversation.

Old Jedidiah had told me the young man had a long police record, and I wasted a whole day before I found out that this consisted of a score of arrests for crimes ranging from the theft of a barber's striped pole to an unproved charge of driving an automobile while intoxicated.
I must have shown my disgust at such evidence because Quinot went to great pains to explain to me that his nephew was such a skilful liar that it had been impossible to convict him of numerous grave offenses of which he had undoubtedly been guilty, but I could not pin him down to just what these were.

Young Cryder, it seemed, according to Jedidiah, was absolutely untrustworthy where facts were concerned and a lover of mischief to such an extent that serious trouble had always been predicted for him.
"Why, do you know," said the old man, "that scapegrace disappeared two years or so ago for six months • and came back with a most remarkable tale about elephant shooting in f East Africa. At my own expense I cabled to Nairobi and found he had never been there. Then what did he do? He produced two of the finest elephant tusks you ever saw and the foot of one of the beasts mounted as a humidor. Furthermore, he had the impudence to present the humidor to me—to me who had exposed him. There it is on the mantel. In my own clulj he met and talked for two hours with a man who had spent years in East Africa without making a single slip."

"Maybe he was there," I ventured.
"He certainly was not," Jedidiah replied with some heat. "After I had been laughed at to such an extent that I did not dare visit my club, I investigated still further. He had spent those six months in Paris. He bought the elephant trophies by cable in London after I had questioned his story, and he spent a month reading every book on Africa and elephant hunting he could find.
"He isn't any mere fibber, Mr. Guernsey. When he sets out to tell a lie, he makes a thorough job of it."

With the picture of that wonderful office fresh in my mind, I was of the opinion that there was much strength in Jedidiah's opinion.
The Hectopus Mining and Exploration Co., it seemed, was in somewhat the same category as the elephant trophies. The story of the

mine had followed another of the young man's more or less regular but mysterious absences. This time he had not told where he had been, but lent an air of mystery to his recent experiences. For three or four weeks after his reappearance at home he had gone about clad in laced boots and wearing a tourist-style Stetson, khaki riding breeches and a Norfolk jacket. His face was bronzed, his hands calloused and he had cultivated a drawl that might have been acquired in Georgia, Arizona or the Blue Ridge mountains. To all inquiries as to where he had been, he had replied by placing a finger to his lips, glancing furtively about and whispering the one word—"Gold." According to Quinot, his nephew had followed up this bit of playacting with a lie as elaborate as the elephant story. But with this difference—he had commercialized his mendacity. In the case of the elephant he had reached his climax by the gift of the humidor trophy to his indignant uncle ; in the present episode he had gone to the length of selling for money stock in a gold mine which did not exist.

"Why?" had been about the third question I asked when I started the investigation.
The answer was simple enough. Herbert Cryder was "broke." One cannot go on forever playing practical jokes which involve such expenses as a pair of elephant tusks and the like indefinitely unless one is a multimillionare. And this our young friend was not. He had inherited about $150,000 from his father and apparently started out to spend it on a million dollar scale. Just before he vanished on the trip that preceded the gold mine story, he was known to be playing heavily in the market and the result had evidently been disastrous. He had admitted as much—talked about it quite openly, in fact—and the news was common gossip.

There was a further motive which Jedidiah explained to me at length and which sounded perfectly logical after I had induced him to talk. He did not want to tell me anything about it at first, saying it was purely a family matter.
It seemed that Cryder was in line for another fortune—a big one this time, amounting to about threequarters of a million. This was the estate of a childless old uncle ofl whom he had once been the favorite but in whose "black book" his escapades had enrolled him time and again. If Cryder could tide matters over until the death of this uncle, Quinot demonstrated, and at the same time appear to have settled down as a solid business man, he would be fixed for life. It all sounded simple enough to me. The old uncle was apparently already on his death bed, with stocks of the Hectopus in his vaults, and all Cryder had to guard against was a speedy exposure.

II

To those of us who knew these facts it was plain that behind his laughing mask young Cryder was nothing less than a desperate adventurer, staking his wits and his nerve against time and fate in a game for the fortune of old Ezekiel Cryder.
It had been about a year, I learned, since Cryder had appeared at home in his Wild West outfit and mysteriously

whispered about gold. At first
his friends had merely laughed* among
themselves at what they called
"Herb's latest," but finally Cryder
had begun to scatter a few nuggets
around as souvenir gifts in the form
of scarf pins, cuff links and one thing
and another, and he even tried to pay
for a round of drinks out of a "poke"
of gold dust. Raised quite a row, it
seems, because they didn't have gold
scales at the cashier's desk to weigh
it, like they do in a new mining camp.
Pretty soon his friends were demanding
to buy shares in the mine.
Cryder had laughed at them, just like
he laughed at me, but they kept at
him and persuaded him—as they
thought—to form a company and issue
stock. He sold it cheap enough
—ten dollars for a $100 share—but apparently
he had sold quite a lot,
nobody knew then just how much.
He had pretended that he wanted
to keep it a close corporation—so
that he could have full control himself,
he said—and wouldn't sell to
anyone except close friends and relatives.
Old Ezekiel bought quite a
block and even Jedidiah bought some.
He had an honest young lawyer as
"general counsel," and almost at the
start declared a dividend of ten per
cent.

The stock certificates were beautifully
engraved and the prospectus
was a work of art. I read it through
three times before I discovered that
it was all generalities and that nowhere
in it was the mine definitely
located. It was, some place that the
book described as the "El Dorado of
the Munificent West," and that's no
place to buy a railroad ticket to.
It was after the dividend that he
hired Garrity and the ten extra
stenographers and opened the mahogany
offices. Several of his friends
got pinched in the market about that
time and sold their stock to strangers.
These began calling for information
and reports and things, and
young Cryder did not laugh as much
as he used to, folks said. Something
was really worrying him. In another
week Jedidiah Quinot, among others,
became suspicious and he would have
carried the tale to old Ezekiel had
not the physicians forbidcTen him to
see the sick man. As a result of this,
he had appealed to the Department
and I was put on the case.
Of course I could have gone
straight to Cryder, showed my credentials
and demanded his books, the
location of the mine and all the rest
of the information I wanted, but
Cryder was supposedly a citizen of
some importance in that community
—no common crook—and besides that
there kept buzzing in the back of
my mind a lingering suspicion of
Jedidiah Quinot, the chief complainant
in the case. While he seemed to
be all broken up over the matter,
nevertheless I had found out that in
case old Ezekiel Cryder disinherited
his nephew, his fortune would go to
Quinot's son.

So, instead of declaring myself to
Herbert Cryder, I called on his "general
manager," Mr. Richard Garrity.
Dick was not exactly pleased to see
me when I ran across him in the lobby
of his hotel, but he was quite willing
to renew our acquaintance and talk
at length. Garrity had been wondering
for some time why I did not send
him to the penitentiary and seemed
to think it was because I had use for
him outside. The fact was T did not
have the evidence but he thought I

had and I was willing to let him hold that belief. It certainly helped in this case.

"Where's the mine?" echoed Garrity in response to my first pointed question. "There isn't any mine. I don't sabe the game myself and I don't ask too many questions but I know that. Why, I wrote that prospectus myself and it's a dandy, if I do say it. I'm drawing down good money as a coach for the young man because he's never even seen a gold mine. Outside of that he don't need any help from me. Why, Guernsey, this Cryder is such a magnificent liar that he makes me ashamed of myself. Sometimes when he's talking for effect I can just sec that old Hectopus mine, with men shoveling out gold, big mountains all around and the thriving city that's springing up there in the wilderness. Honest, it is a pretty picture that forms while he's talking."
"But the samples," I asked. "Where does he get his samples—his nuggets and gold dust, and so on?"
"Oh, those things," Garrity answered with a laugh. "Why, he bought those nugget pins and cuff buttons in Seattle. They're quite common out there—made out of Alaskan gold. I bought the gold dust right here in town, and to make it look proper I sent West for some black sand that the gold is usually found in a placer diggings. That's easy enough to find but there isn't usually more than a trace of gold in it. All I did was mix some dust and small nuggets in with the sand and we had the raw product 'fresh from the Hectopus/ as Cryder says.
"It's been funny, Guernsey," he concluded. "It's been good fun and good pay too, but I suppose it's all over now. Say, isn't there any chance to save the young fellow from going to the pen? He's a helluva good scout."

Garrity really seemed to be in earnest about this end of the matter and I was puzzled. Sentiment was a new quality in Dick.
"But why did he do it?" I asked. "What's behind it all?"
"Broke, they say," said Garrity. "But damned if I know really what it is all about. He seems to have plenty of money. That dividend was his own idea, and he paid out over $10,000 in cash on it without turning a hair. For a guy who's broke, he's about the nerviest gambler I've ever struck because we did not need to pay that dividend a-tall. 'I just want to show them how good this mine really is,' he says to me, with a twinkle in his eye. And all I could do was just set there and stare at him with my mouth open.

"Why, if this was my deal, Guernsey, and I had this guy for a 'dummy' president, I could clean up a hundred thousand here in a month and beat it for Russia or Bones Airs or some place where even you couldn't get me. But this Cryder fellow—why, he seems to get all het up every time anybody tries to buy some stock and spends more time telling the suckers he's already landed what a great mine it is, than he does figuring out where the money for the next dividend is coming from."
"Is he going to pay another?" I asked, startled, for this was news to me.

"He sure is. It's already announced for October—that's six weeks from

now, and I happen to know that there isn't money enough in our account to more than half meet it."
"Then you—think—" I ventured.
"Look here, Guernsey," said Garrity, reaching over and laying his hand on my knee. "I'^je come clean on this and I'll go further. I know some other things that you'd like to know—things that would help you a lot in Washington. Isn't there some chance for Cryder? Can't we make him see that he's in over his head and get a settlement before it's too late. I can't—I just can't see that boy go over the road."
There it was again—Dick Garrity with sentiment in his soul—the unknown quantity heretofore in that old swindler. Herbert Cryder, I decided, must be a regular fellow, and with the determination to visit him in the morning in my proper guise, I went to bed.

But in the morning Cryder had disappeared. Garrity was waiting for me, white of face, at the foot of the elevator shaft with the news. He had found a note on his desk, he said, instructing him to keep the office open as usual, and inclosing a check for $3,000 for expenses while he was gone.
"Where did he say he was going?" I demanded.
Garrity sighed as he produced the note.
"To visit the mine," he said, and added plaintively: "Do you suppose the boy's lost his mind entirely. You know and I know, Guernsey, there's no more Hectopus mine than that elm over there in the park is a plum tree."

I was rather glad of the change. The new development gave me a chance to get out into the open. Trailing men across wide stretches always was more in my line than trailing plots through the pages of ledgers and letter files. Dick helped me, both because he was afraid of me and anxious to save his boss from something he could not understand —and before noon I was aboard a train and speeding for Montreal.
No, I did not have any thought that he had fled to Canada to escape from me. He had no idea who I was and also, Canada is no safe refuge for evil-doing Americans. Maybe it was once, but not in my time. I had no notion why he had gone there except a suspicion that he might have a confederate on the other side of the border who would provide the funds for the October dividend.
But that wasn't it. Cryder stayed in Montreal just long enough to catch the limited for the West Coast. The news of that rather staggered me and I missed the next train after him raising money enough to follow. You know we are not supposed to go outside the United States without a lot of red tape being unwound, but this Cryder fellow had sort of got my goat and I borrowed some coin from some Canadian officers I knew and went ahead with just a few cards of introduction from them instead of new credentials from Washington. We have to do that occasionally. If we make good, we are praised ; if we get into a jam, we get fired.

Cryder was an easy man to follow on this trip, and I had plenty of leisure to enjoy my journey across the continent. I don't mean that the

young fellow was leaving any broad trail of empty bottles and twenty dollar tips along the right of way of the Canadian Pacific, but he was making himself known to every one he met and his scintillating personality was one to be remembered. All along I found that he had talked nothing but mines and mining and that he had made a trip up into Edmonton to look into the Fort Norman reports of gold and oil along the Mackenzie.

I almost missed him there and had to double back from Banff before I picked up his trail. I lost it again after I passed Field, B. C, on my second dash for the coast, and had to come back—carefully this time—before I found he had left the main highway at a little town called Hope, perched between the mountains and the Fraser River Canyon and struck off into the hills.

There is still gold along the Fraser. On the sand bars that ridge the rushing torrent every half mile or so. Chinamen can still be seen washing the sands of the river and turning "color" with almost every pan. But the best of them average only about two dollars a day and white men merely laugh as they pass them by. It doesn't pay for grub, hardship and loneliness. But this was a great country once. Back in the 50's Hope was a great outfitting point for a stampede of Americans who had failed to find fortunes at the first few turns of a shovel in the California rush, and chased the rainbow a thousand miles northward rather than return East empty handed.
There certainly is gold in the Fraser. Everyone could see that. But the tossing, heaving, rushing waters knew nothing of its value. Only on the sandbars could it be found and the rambunctious river tore these down over night and erected new ones every morning. Every miner knows that gold in rivers is washed down from the hills and for seventy years prospectors have been seeking the "mother lode" of the Fraser deposits. Ten thousand hopeful men have crossed the hills from Hope to seek this treasure house of Nature. Herbert Cryder, I soon found out, had been the ten-thousand-and-first.
There was no concealment about his journey. He was easier to follow than a new yellow freight car.
The guides who had taken him into the hills were already back in Hope when I arrived there, and perfectly willing to repeat their thirty-six hour journey with no questions asked. In fact, they volunteered the information that Cryder had bought an abandoned claim without even looking at it, and taken a crew of six men—fully equipped with grub and tools for placer work in with him. The head man of the pack train tapped his forehead and winked solemnly as he told me about it, but beyond that he was non-communjeative. As for me, I walked down to the river and looked at the waters as they rushed through the canyon on their way to the sea, the snow-capped mountains from which the flood had tumbled and the ruined little town which still clung to its post between the railroad and the torrent, and pinched myself to retain the idea that 1 was an officer of the United States Government in pursuit of a criminal.

They had told me there was but one trail across the hills to Cryder's claim, but apparently they did not

know Cryder. Because, when we arrived
at his camp, he was not there.
"Gone back to the Fraser to spear
salmon." a disgusted Irish laborer informed
me as he took a fresh grip on
his shovel.
It was dusk then and I was tired
out from unaccustomed pony travel
over the rough trail. I was glad
enough to accept the foreman's offer*
of supper and a bed in his tent and
put off any further investigation until
morning. Tired as I was, the foreman
and I talked together well into
the night and long after he had begun
snoring I lay awake thinking over the
things he had told me. I could not
believe them. As nearly as I dared
I had called the man a liar and accused
him of being in league with
Cryder. He had refused to talk at all
until I had shown him my American
credentials—worthless in British Co
lumbia, but he did not know that.
Then I found myself facing again
that strange loyalty and sentimentality
in this rough mine-workman that
I had found in Dick Garrity, softpalmed
swindler.

Could Cryder's swindle be as farreaching
as this, I wondered. Could
he possibly have enlisted and coached
this man in three days and then brazenly
left him here alone. I knew
that Cryder had never been in the
district before. I knew that McGuire,
the foreman, was a native of Hope.
I knew that all Cryder had done in
the camp was to take a few snapshots
after the men he had brought
in had started digging and put up
a sign he had had painted in Hope.
The sign was non-committal. It was
merely a white board with black lettering
planted against the face of a
huge cliff. "Hectopus Mine," was all
it said.

Two days later I was again walking
the brink of the Fraser River
Canyon. I was waiting for Cryder
—reported somewhere in the neighborhood—
and for a train. A hundred
feet below me the same river boiled
and swirled. It might have been the
same water I had first seen, turning
a corner and returning, so eternal was
the tumult. It seemed as though the
Fraser were composed of liquid hills
and valleys, so firmly did the currents
force the water into fantastic
moulds.
Turning a bend in the stream in a
longer cast for views, I finally came
upon a spectacle that was strangely
familiar. Far down below me was a
tiny platform made of driftwood on
driftwood piles, and upon it perched
an Indian with a long spear. His
lance darted once into the tumbling
water and was withdrawn with a
huge fish squirming on its point. A
salmon, I knew, and with the knowledge
came recollection. This was a
picture almost the same as the painting
over Cryder's desk. I had
wronged the man from the start. Not
suckers but game fish ; that was his
ideal.

Even as I looked, another figure
clambered to the little platform—
Cryder himself. I could see the Indian
shake his head and motion him
back with his hand, but Cryder
climbed on and strode out upon the
platform. It showed he was new to
the country. The little perch Avas
safe enough for the Indian, but
under the second man's two hundred
pounds it buckled, swayed, collapsed,
and both were thrown into
the torrent, fifty yards above

me.

I have said that I knew at the start that Cryder was no ordinary crook. I have told about the strange sentimentality of Garrity and McGuire. I have said nothing about my own feelings. I doubt if I had analyzed them myself. But I held my breath as I saw him fall and, almost before I knew it, had peeled my coat and plunged into the Fraser after him. I am a rather strong swimmer or I would not be alive to tell this today. The Indian helped me a little at first but Cryder had got a bump on the head and was a drag on both of us. Next minute the Indian was crashed against a rock and only managed to struggle ashore. I finally landed Cryder a mile down the canyon where the current, rather than I, washed us on a sandbar where a Chinaman was stolidly panning out gold.

From some place the Chink produced a bottle of alcohol, or gin, I don't know which, and finally Cryder opened his eyes. He did not remember ever having seen me before and was a little "woozy," I suppose.

"How do you feel, Cryder?" I asked.
"You know my name?" he asked.
"Who are you ?"
"Guernsey's my name," I said.
"United States Post Office Inspector."
"What are you doing way up here?"
"I've been following you for a month or so."
Cryder sighed and closed his eyes again.
"Oh, hell," he said, finally. "All that fuss. I'll pay out all right. There's two hundred thousand in the bank. I'm not broke. I made a fortune in that stock deal and told everybody I was broke. Please let me go on with it. I must get back with these pictures of the mine and drive old Jedidiah out of his club again. It'll only cost me about twenty thousand more and it's well worth it. I've spent so much time on it and it's such a grand yarn."

I shook him by the shoulder.
"But it's not like you to deceive people in this manner," I shouted in his ear.
"Don't you worry about that," he answered. "Jedidiah is only waiting to steal the pennies off Uncle Zeke's eyes. I just wanted to get that old double-crosser so good he wouldn't dare hold his head up. I wanted to show everybody who was the better business man—me or him. I guess I've done it. I've done something nobody ever did before. I've sold stock in a mine that never existed, paid dividends on it, made them want to emigrate out here, and now I've provided them with a spot to emigrate to. The big joke will come when Jedidiah gets out here and tries to find the gold."

I thought he had fainted in earnest, when his voice trailed oft" in a whisper at the close. But he rallied again and opened his eyes with a faint but whimsical smile.
"Cryder." I shouted. "There is gold in the Hcctopus. McGuirc has found a pocket that is worth a quarter of a million dollars if it is worth a cent. Do you hear me?"
The smile on his face broadened, then was replaced by a frown.
"Hell," he muttered. "All that time

wasted. And it was such a perfectly beautiful lie."

Fifth On The List

by Harry Stephen Keeler
from *10 Story Book* - March 1922

EDDIE the Strangler was broke again. It seemed as though nothing could be done to relieve this condition of impecunio ity-except, of cour~e-another "job" like the previous ones. After all-why work for a living? It was so ea y for one to come silently through the window, approach the bed in stockingfeet, and then quickly fasten one's long steel-like fingers about the neck of the leeper. To be sure, it required steady nerve-particularly during the short struggle that always ensued in the darkness-but there was little chance for one to fail if one took sufficient pains to get one's thumb in the proper position on the windpipe. Then, too, although becoming less so each succeeding time, it was still rather unpleasant to have to view the purplish-black face of the dead person after the "job" was completed, the tiny pocket light turned on, and the search for the valuables begun. However, one had to endure these little trials for the sake of the recompense, since always-if one did not take it upon oneself to endure them-loomed up the dread possibility of having to earn one's bread by manual labor.

Thus reflected Eddie the Strangler as he leaned against a convenient lamp post with his hands sunk deep in his pockets and his hat pulled down over his forehead, waiting expectantly.

Apprehensively his eyes glanced toward the clock, visible through the glass panel of the corner near-beer saloon door. Eleven P. M.I She certainly ought to be along soon. It was here that he had first seen her, a number of evenings before, as she strode briskly home from some place or other.

Finally she passed. Again Eddie looked her over critically. Not only the diamond hanging from each ear lobe but the rings on her hands as well, showed conclusively that she must possess other jewelry of value. Well-it might as well be tonight as any other time. No use of following her night after night.

A half block behind' her Eddie fell in step. This would be the last time that he need trail her to the place where she lived. His previous shadowing had shown him that she invariably proceeded to a rear room on the first floor of a theatrical boarding house up near Washington Square. By making his way quickly around to the alley, after she closed the front door behind her, and watching her windows as she turned on the lights, he had learned that she lived alone.

This pink-and-white girl would be an easy victim. The very first one of those that went before had been a woman. She had died with but a few impotent thrusting motions of her soft white arms. The next three, though, had been men. They had required more skill, more coolness, especially that huge German ex-bartender out in Et).gelwood. However, one ought not to confine one's attention to the masculine sex 'alone; one should be more universal in one's calling. This handsome creature would help to even things up.

As she ascended' the front steps and shut the door behind her, Eddie shrugged

his should'ers and laughed aloud. Long before this time tomorrow, the newspapers would be out with their glaring headlines reading: "The Strangler Works ,Again" and "Young Woman Found / Mu~dered in Bed. Valuables Miising." Aad he, Eddie, the cause of the extra editions, would be laboriously figuring out the value of the haul at so much p'er carat, in his tiny room in that great jungle, Chicago's West Side.

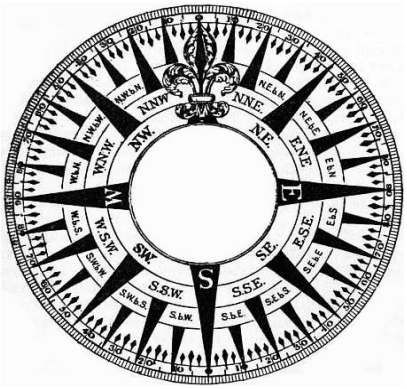
Swiftly he departed for the alley where he secured a pos~tion of vantage between two ash cans and watched her while she entered the room, switched on the light, and drew down the shades. Then he waited patiently until he saw the lights suddenly go out, the shades raised, and one window opened wide to admit the cool breeze from the lake. That, in itself, was luck. He had liked that phase of the situation from the very first moment, a week before, that he had' begun to collect data on the coming affair. It obviated the necessity of bringing along a glass cutter and a cumbersome ball of putty.
An hour passed.

It must be the right time now. Before removing his shoes and climbing up on the fence that separated the two back yards he exercised his fingers vigorously for a few minutes. One's fingers must not be stiff at the crucial moment.
It required but a few seconds to climb from the fence to the sill and to step lightly in through the open window to the floor of the room. For a very short while he stood motionless, listening to the regular breathing of the sleeper.
Then it was that he heard footsteps coming down the hall. Bah! Some fool perhaps about to knock on the door, awaken the girl on the bed, and ruin everything.
Well-there was no need for everything to be ruined. With cat-like tread he crossed the floor to the opposite wall. Good! It w. exactly what he had made it out to be in the'semi-darknessa square trunk. He raised the cover and as he did so a tiny block of wood tumbled to the carpet. With his hand he groped within. Excellent! No trayand empty as well. This would be a safe refuge while the fool outsid'e should either knock or go on about his or her business.

He stepped in with his right foot and followed with his left. Then he sunk to his knees and allowed the cover to drop slowly till an opening of only an inch in height remained. He listened.
"Rap-rap-rap," came from the panel of the door. Then a voice exclaimed,
"Estelle? May we come in a minute? Have you gone to bed yet?"
No answer.
"She's asleep," continued the voice to someone else. "w;.d better not disturb her. It's late."
The footsteps left the region of the door. "Better to wait two or three minutes," thought Eddie, "till everything's quiet again, before tackling the job. These fools might change their minds and come back." He let the heavy lid rest on his shoulders and altered his position a trifle.

"Click!" went the spring-fastening on the "trunk" as the upper half of the mechanism came in contact with the lower half and· locked the cover shut.
"Oh-Oh-Godl!" screamed Mademoiselle Estelle Le Comte, snake charmer at the Hippodrome, next morning as she went to examine her newest python and found him coiled tightly around the neck of a little man whose face was unrecognizable on account of its purplish-black hue, its bulging eyeballs, and its protruding

tongue.



The Search For the “Grand Marais”

The story of a lake captain’s heroism and skill
By Edwin Balmer
from *The American Magazine* - July-Dec. 1922

IT HAD been cold, even for December, on Superior. At eleven o'clock in the morning, when Captain Clem Milter noticed the thermometer, the mercury was away down below zero, with a d gale blowing. Snow was in the win ; but there was nothing to bother si ht or start the steam whistle. Captain Nfilter stood on the bridge of the “ Blaine,” one of the big ore—carriers of the Red Arrow Line, and gazed out at the “How ell,” her sister ship, which was steaming steadily on about two miles ahead and as much more to the north.

“What’s that?” he shouted to Tins man, the second mate, whose words, as he climbed u to the bridge beside his skilpper, had een whipped away by the ga e.

“ Keeler’s getting a call from Marquette, sirl They think the 'Grand Marais' is in trouble off Keweenawl" Keeler was the radio man on the “Blaine.” “Not sure, though, sirl Here’s the message!”

The captain held out his hand for the paper.

Signals from steamer in extreme distress registered this station [it read]. Incomplete or badly interfered with. This station immediate ly answered, but continued to receive only weak and interrupted signals, accompanied re peated calls distress. A private station Keweenaw claims definitely made our name “Marais" and information “helpless offCopper." Message picked up, however, by amateur in stallation copper miner's son, and may not be reliable. If reliable may refer Copper Falls, Keweenaw.’ Amateur also made reply and re ceived repeated distress signals, after which all signals ceased.

Package freighter “Grand Marais," master Henry Stanton, Boynton and Downey, mates, nineteen crew, left this port esterday 4 P. M. for Duluth; met heavy ice but got through; passed Granite Island light 8:30 P. M. Vessel making distress signal ma be “Grand Marais" helpless somewhere offy Keweenaw. Tugs attempting leave'this Ort‘ are 'meeting very heavy ice. All vesse s passing Keweenaw warned watch for signals or boats or wreckage “Grand Marais. " ~

Milter turned his head.

expect to reach position they've reported ’bout three o'clock," he called. “Tell 'em we'll make sure nobody’s there before we go on.

Tinsman nodded and climbed down.

The old captain turned once more to the north, his keen blUe eyes sweeping the shortenin

to set'in Beneath him the vessel was pitchin and rolling in the ever-risin wind. he “Grand Marais" hel less 0 Keweenaw in that wind and seal wenty two men aboard herl He knew none of them, except Stanton and Boynton by “Tell ’em we _

horizon. The snow was about ' name, but he knew the ship-—-an old, high-decked steamer, white-painted and mostly wood, with old machinery, un

doubtedly; just the sort of hooker to snap her shaft or burst a main feed pipe in a blow; and then, God help her, With that ugl , rocky coast of Keweenaw down wind anl her high, wooden sides catching the ga e.

The day was the fourth of December, at the very end of the season of possible navigation on Superior. Officially, the rts of Marquette, Ashland, L'Anse, and assage Island already were closed, and,‘ in ph sical fact, locked and sealed with ice. uluth, far to the west, and protected by the west gales from the onslaught of Hoes, might remain “open"-—-that meant passable—for a week yet, but the $00 in the east, toward which the "Blaine" was headed, was fast freezing. The $00, of course, is the gate of the Great Lakes. When it closes, Superior is shut. So each of the dozen ships still left on the lake was racing to reach the $00 and get through before the freeze-up.

“Ice; drift ice ahead, sir!” came back the hail from the lookout in the bow. Milter saw it at almost the same mo ment—more of that floe which he had sighted before the snow had shut out everything. No danger to the “Blaine” from that in deep water; so he held his helm where it was. While the ice, tossed back from the “ Blaine's" sides, rode on the waves and drummed upon the long, re sounding sides of his ship, Milter repeated to himself“ . . . after which all signals ceased.” The requiem of how many ships and how many good men!

PERHAPS, though, the“Grand Marais ” was helpless and unable even to send radio signals, but still floated; in that event—and it was the only one which offered Milter hope' of-a'rrivirtg in time to be of any use—the “Grand Marais” mustlbe'beingblown upon the rocksrof’ Kéweenaw. _ _ _ " i

"‘ Fosdick’s been warned, too, of corirse," Milter shouted to,Tinsman> when the second mate returned, Fosdiék was cap tain of the f'Howell,” the sister ship, now lost from si ht in the snow. 1 I

“Yes, ‘sir 's replied to'Marquette like we have.” ' i

Abaft the bridge, the “Blaine's” steam' whis'tle'burst the three short blasts of,a steamer under way through snow; and back on the wind from the northeast came the sound of the “Howell's” steam whistle. '

Until two o’clock nothing more was to be heard, and nothing at all was to be seen; the radio bore no more si als hav in to do with the “Grand arais” or e orts for its relief except that, about half past one, Mar uette wirelessed that the tugs, which ha been trying to leave the harbor, had given it up. '

At two o’clock—in accordance with the agreement by which Captains Milter and Fosdick were to inform each other of any change of course or speed—Fosdick wirelessed to the “ Blainez" “I am making fourteen knots; bearing now east-north east.

THIS meant that after more than a hundred miles of safe going, there was creeping in on them from the south the ugly, barbed point of Keweenaw, all mountain, mine, rock, and deadly shoal. Here, if a skipper is weak, or not sure of himself, he longs to edge off and off. Of course it is, in such weather, the safe and sensible thing to do; that was what Fos dick was doing. “East-northeast.” He'd inted north of his revious course. orth! God knows, the ‘Grand Marais" could not be there!

Clement Milter realized this, and him self did differently from Fosdick without contempt or_feeling himself superior. Fos dick was a good navi ator and, by all the records of the Red rrow ledgers, a far

better man than Clem Milter.
Though a dozen boards of trade from Duluth to Buffalo had voted Milter thanks and praise for his seamanship and courage in saving life on the lakes; though his testimonial gold watches—which his wife wound every morning for him—ticked in the drawer in his Charlevoix cottage like timepieces in a pawnbroker's window, yet the stern, unemotional balance sheets of the Red Arrow line proved that he was by far the most extravagant of its skippers, and the "Blaine" the most unreliable ship of the line. Reliable, with Clem Milter aboard? The Lord knew rift: when any craft called for help any were from Granite Point to Pancake shoals, Clem Milter was never going to keep in mind a little matter like an_ appointment for four thousand tons of iron in Chicago.

Consequently, in these seasons of high costs and hard money, he could no longer be forgiven. That incident with the "Nerenden'I finall had exhausted patience with him. here the "Nerenden," had been, hard and fast aground on Gull Island, with her crew in no real danger; but Milter had gone in to t to elp them. He had accomplished noil'iing. The "Nerenden," broke in two and her crew got away in their own boats. So Milter scraped his bottom for nothing, and brought his ship, almost in a sinking state, into Duluth, where it required twenty days in dock for repairs at appalling figures. Now the "Blaine" was out, withMilteronthebridge; but no one knew better than he that in all human probability it was his last run. For the sake of his long service with the line, the directors were letting him finish the season before they would "retire" him—with a testimonial dinner perhaps. Young Heron, his mate, would be on the bridge next April.

MILTER, while holding his own course, to keep his ship close to the Keweenaw rocks, wondered only whether he was a fool. He wondered if he was actually becoming too old and emotional; he wondered if going in, at risk of his own ship, to help another was becoming a curse to him. But he held his course close and each minute closer to the shoals of Keweenaw.
At three o'clock he reached the position olf the point on the cape known as Copper Falls. That is, by dead reckoning he was there. He could not see the shore, for the snow was scudding thick, as at noon; the wind was straight down from the north and blowing a blizzard. The thermometer had dropped to five below zero; and the "Blaine," as she rolled, was heavier bow and stem by mounting tons of ice. Fosdick at the same time had reached the probable position of the "Grand

Marais," he re rted by
wireless to hf; uette.
He reported to ilter
that he had slowed to
seven knots and was
circling to left in his search for the ship.
For three hours without encountering each other—without the steam whistle of one being heard by the other—the two vessels searched for the "Grand Marais," for boats or wreckage, and found nothing.
At six o'clock the storm was still blow ing; the gale, if anything, was increasing; and the thermometer showed ten below.
Night had come then, of course—the blackest of black nights enciled with white where the snow scurried in front of the searchli ht, but elsewhere blind-black and thick. he "Howell" for some time had been talking with Marquette; of course Keeler on the "Blaine" picked up
How close It came, sweeping through the snow, and yet missed them.
both sides of the exchange. Fosdick in quired whether Marquette had any original information—except the broken messages said to have been received by the boy who made the first report—that the shi in trouble was the "Grand Marais' off Copper Falls. No, Mar quette admitted. Then Fosdick wanted to know whether there was any reliable evidence that any ship was in trouble off Keweenaw.
"No," Marquette admitted again. The "Grand Marais" had left Mar uette last night. and since eight-thirty ha not been heard from; but, except for the patched up "strays" which the boy had relayed, They
there was no proof that the original dis tress signals recorded at Marquette were made by her or by an vessel off Kewee naw or elsewhere in . uperior. At about that time, a ship on Lake Michigan, the "Elenwood," had been making distress signals. It was possible that these were the strays picked up b Marquette.
Ten minutes later, the "Howell" wire lessed, therefore:
Have searched supposed position of ship possibly "_Grand Marais" for three hours, hear ing no signals and finding no evidence of wreck.
At that time, accordingly, the "Howell" screamed; but the light did not halt or waver; it swept on; then God sent it back abandoned the search, and proceeded on her course for the Soo. Heron, who had gone off duty above when Tinsman began his watch, in person brou ht the informa tion to Milter, who ha been continu ously on the bridge since two o'clock.

THE spurt of warmth and strength which sustained Milter when first he received the news of men in danger calling to him, had exhausted itself long ago; he was nerveless and weak now, and very cold. Even the hot black cofi'ee brou ht him in a bottle, and of which he dran a quart had ceased to stimulate him—but he would not go in. He wanted to be out where he could heat for himself whether on the wind there came the echo of shots or screams of men in open boats, and to see, as the searchli ht shifted here and there, whether it liglited anything which might be wreckage.
Young Heron, who had been below long enou h to get warm, came up beside him.
" he 'Howell's' oing on, sirl" he yelled at Milter. " osdick's just heard from Marquette that probably the 'Grand Marais' wasn't in trouble at all. They think now it was signals from the 'Elenwood' over on Michigan."
" How's that?" Milter called back, and made Heron tell him in detail.
"So you see, sir,"
Heron finished, s eaking
the word of addiess to
his skipper but 'ust as
though to a chil —or a

very old man. “There’s no use looking for the ‘Grand Marais’ here. Fosdick’s gone on; the 800’s still open. We ought to go on now, sir!”

Milter felt himself giving in; how eas and agreeable to go on All you'd have to do was to set your course north a bit to clear, without dan ger, those Keweenaw rocks you’d been hug ging for three hours; and stop listening and strain ing your eyes and worry ing; you’d go below and get warm and strong again. Go on! Take your ship through the 500, as Fosdick was tak ing his, and to Chicago, as your directors paid you to do.

“The ‘Howell’s’ gone on, sir," young Heron’s voice shouted again, in his impatience with a stubborn old man. “We’re going on now?"

Clem Milter shook his head.“We’ve been standing out too far all the time,” he said. “Of course we couldn’t find ’em. They're blown aground!”
And he descended now to his ~pilothouse to be within grip of his wheel, as he bore his ship about and swung closer to that lee shore of rock and shoal, which he could not see.
In that position, the lead could help him hardly at all, as every one knows who has any familiarity with sound ings in Superior; for, off Keweenaw, the water runs deep — eighty fath oms—and nin..;' almost to the shore; then, from five hundred feet below you, the rocks rise and, if you're on them, that’s all. Hearing could not help him that night; for every shore signal was down wind; the sound of the surf was down wind; and sight was almost a useless sense that night. As Milter piloted his ship, he reckoned subconsciously how far he steamed in this direction, subtracted from it the drift of the gale, allowed for the swing of the waves, and this told him where he was. Thus, for three hours more, he guided the “Blaine,” with four thou sand tons of ore in her hold, 11 the hidden coast of Keweenaw, turn and came back.
By nine o'clock, the young men—Heron and Tinsman—were certain he was crazy, and talked about taking the ship from him. They did not guess it, but at times they might have taken it almost without a struggle; for the old man felt himself spent at last, and beaten. He was encountering ice almost ceaselessly now, and more and heavier ice heaped up before the “ Blaine’s" bows all the time and the night was bitter cold. At nine o’clock, thinking of Fosdick, he realized that the “Howell” by that hour had turned Manitou Island and was out in open water again on the free, south east reach for the 500; by morning Fos dick would be in the bay and moving in his turn to the locks. Fosdick—Milter

reckoned—would get his ship through to Chicago. But Clem Milter knew that now he would never get the " Blaine" out of Superior; these last three hours of night and cold had determined that. He realized that by his own choice, and his own will, he had finally condemned him self with the Red Arrow Line.

His wife, he thought, would understand him, and, for what he tried to do, love him as much, though he had ruined himself byit; but his boys—he thought—would only be sorry for him when they heard. They would say they were proud; but Clem suspected that they could not help feeling contemptuous of him for getting so little out of his long, hard life. Neither of them would have anything to do with the water. Walt was in the real-estate busi neSs in Detroit, and Clem owned a garage in Chicago; they were on their wa to be coming rich; they would not be le t at the end of their lives with nothing but a drawerful of watches to wind, and a cottage window to sit in and see the ships go by.

AT NINE o'clock, the men ofthe "Grand Marais"—those who survived—had about given up hope of rescue. Of the twenty-two who had left Marquette, seven remained—five clinging to the foremast, two in the aftermast. Of the missing, six had been lost in the smash of the yawl when they attempted to get away from the sinking "Grand Marais;" the rest probably were swept off as the water came over. None of the seven survivors knew. Of the five on the foremast, no one knew, even, how many had reached the spars of the aftermast; of the two aft, neither knew more than that some men were on the foremast.

Among the five, an oiler named El dridge had a pocket flashlight, which he burned now and then. But communica tion between the masts was impossible; for the vessel had sunk in about thirty feet of water, with only her masts above the waves. Her master and second mate were among the missing, so First Mate Boynton, a man about thirty years old, assumed what command there was. This consisted chiefly in attempts to keep up the courage of the men, and in taking away the flashlight from Eldridge so he would not burn it out when nobody was about to see.

Boynton knew the lakes well, and guessed pretty closely the "Grand Ma rais's" position. He knew that to-night there was no possible help from the shore; for it is a lonely, ugly stretch in there, with nothing but copper mines up in the hills. No one could possibly see them from the hills; and if someone guessed they were there, nobody could come out in small boats through the ice-filled water.

THE sole hope was from the lake; and every man could remember, without need of Boynton's reminding, that after the "Grand Marais" had become helpless, unable even to blow, they had heard the blasts of a steam whistle, which they dis tinguished as coming from a vessel which seemed to be searching for them. Shots had been fired on the "Grand Marais," in response; rockets sent up and tar barrels burned; the "Grand Marais," when over whelmed by water, with her firehold flooded, had gone down with an oil barrel - burning on her forward deck. But no one had seen it for the blinding snow; so, about five o'clock, it had seemed that the steamer which had been blowing had gone on; but at seven o'clock, more than an hour after the "Grand Marais" struck the reef, everyone on the foremast had clearly heard the regular, strong blasts of a steam whistle; every man on both masts

had yelled himself to exhaustion scream ing in the wind to make the vessel hear, and Boynton burned Eldridge's battery continuously, waving the little light above his head as long as the whistle could be heard. But it had gone.

Now they were covered with ice, all of them; some—the weakest and most despairing—froze to the mast and could not move. But Boynton kept his arms free and kept Eldridge and Svenson, who were next him, somewhat free; for it was not in Boynton to give up. Yet it seemed of no possible use. For almost three hours —Boynton had a watch which he could see when he flashed Eldridge's light— no one saw or heard anything. Then two of them heard, at the same time, a steam whistle, closer than ever before.
That brought some of the blood back to Boynton's freezing limbs; he called out to the men, who had sunk into a stupor, that the ship had come back for them. He' yelled and got them to yell cries, which were hardly whispers now. No one Could hear them; no one could see Eldridge's dim little light, he knew. Yet the ship came closer; her master, whoever he might be, was bringing her along almost on the shoals, swinging her searchlight before her. Oh, pull, pull the light this way! It seemed to Boynton, with his numbed hands outstretched, he must reach that beam and drag it to him. How close it came, sweeping through the snow, and yet missed them. They screamed; but the light did not halt or waver; it swept on; then God sent it back. It caught them; the green glare was in their faces and they saw one another; saw the mast, the ice which covered them. They saw, and they were seen! Now the light was gone to the aftermast; it gleamed on the water between them where the hull ought to be. Loud, short, and again and blew, telling them that they were seen.

Then they saw that the steamer was an ore carrier, deep laden.

Clem Milter, on his ice-crusted bridge, stared down the beam of his searchlight, trying to see whether some of the figures moved. The masts were a quarter of a mile from the " Blaine;" for the snow had thinned again with the coming of the night cold and one could see with the searchlight for several hundred yards. Milter could see that the masts themselves were shaking from the impact of the water; he could see shadows cast by the searchlight, shifting; but he could not be confident that what he saw was any man moving. Seven men seemed to be there.
"Seven!" said Heron to Milter.
"Seven!" counted Tinsman. "Five on one mast; two on the other."
He looked at the lake, at the masts, and back to Milter; it was plain to him, as it was to Heron and everyone else on the " Blaine" that, if those on the masts lived, there was onl one possible way to save them: the " laine ' must go in beside those spars in that ice-filled, gale-swept sea. Too frightful a risk for anyone to take unless he was sure he was going to rescue men who still lived; too frightful a risk in any case, perhaps.
Tinsman gazed at the masts again, and suddenly 'erked.
"A Has there, sir! A light! See it!"

HERE on the mast to the left which at thatinstant was dark as the searchlight played on the water, a dim, yellow glow showed and vanished, and showed again.
"I see it," Milter said, and found him self strong again in his triumph and joy— and under the new challenge which was now put to him.
"'I hey're alive there, sir," Heron said, and turned away and went down to order what must be done; for he knew Milter was taking the "Blaine" in.

“The ’re alive there; yes,” Milter said aloud, ut to himself. “It's like the ‘ Kelwin’.” Memories again, you see; the grip of the past on him. \Ncll, he knew just what to do. Twenty-six years ago, when he had become master of the “ Patrick Way,” he had put her beside the “Kelwin,” sunk like the “Grand Marais” in about five fathoms of water and with the seas going over her; and had taken off five men. Seven were here, and on two masts, not just one. The “Patrick Way” had been light in ballast that night; the " Blaine, " besides being longer and bigger, was heavy with four thousand tons of ore. That was another difference, but not all disadvantage. The “Blaine,” thereL fore, was steadier.

Thus Clem Milter half recollected, half thought out his plan as he climbed down to his pilothouse. That night, on the “ Patrick Way," he had taken the wheel; and now himself he took the “Blaine’s.” Steady and strong—how strong she was, how powerful and dependable her en gines, even when reduced now to half speed and now to half that again. He was comparing his task of handling the “Blaine”—you see—not with his ordi nary daily work, but with that night on the “Patrick Way." And how that load of ore deadened the shock of the waves and lessened the swing of the wind; it was like a platform to-night, his deck, com pared with that leaping, swaying, tossing deck of the old “Patrick Way." But he was drawing more water; the “\Vay" wanted barely three fathoms; now he must have more than four. Ten he had; now eight; six! Five and a half! Five! Ah, six again! That’s better; he must re member that. He needed near five fathoms, not the scant three which would float the “Patrick Way,” and when the waves dropped you, you needed a full fathom more to spare. He must remember he was not back on theold “ Patrick Way,” though here on the masts just ahead and now closer, closer, steadily closer, were men—five men tearing themselves, and helping each other pull themselves, free from those ice-covered spars, so they could drop on his deck as he offered it under them—just as they had dropped on the “Patrick Way's."

One; now two together; two more. Heron, there, caught that last man; good man, Heron—0r he’d been carried away. Two more were fallen there on the fore deck. From the other mast, of course. Out now; out; steady! Not even a touch of the hull of the ‘ Blaine” against the hull, below the waves, of the “Grand Marais." Pattl that was the angle the "Grand Marais ’ spars had leaned to lake ward; partly it was the steadying weight of that iron ore; artly it must have been something an old)man learned twenty-six years ago when he was young and master of the “Patrick Way.”
“Ten fathoms, sir!” Now, fifteen; twenty! Now, no bottom with a twenty fathom line! That meant he had brought the “Blaine” in and out again, and safely in deep water once more; just as, twenty six years ago, he'd brought off the “ Pat rick Way.” As good a man as ever . . . no, after all; not quite. For twenty-six years ago, when he’d brought out the “Patrick \‘Vay,n he’d stepped back from the wheel and handed it OVer when he was through; but to-night they had to take it from him. His head fell over, and he fainted there.
HEY flashed “things” about Clement Milter from mast to mast all over the lake that night; for about Superior, as nowhere else, they could a preciate what Milter had done. But in hicago, too, in the room where the directors of the Red Arrow Line met, men also understood, though to most of them the coast of

Keweenaw was only a rugged line on a chart on the wall.

It was only two days later that the directors assembled for their end of the season meeting to hear reports on their ships for the ear. All vessels were where they should be, with cargoes discharged an ready for the lay—up for the winter—all but two: the "Blaine," with her four thousand tons ofiron yet in her hold, back in Duluth; and the "Howell," also with four thousand tons ofore, frozen in White fish Buy. For the "Howell" did not get to the Soo. That meant extra risks, exrra insurance and all-around costs for the "Howell" all winter; trouble for Fosdick in that. For Milter, with his ship back in Duluth—well, that was better than hav ing her frozen in Whitefish Bay, just from the dollars and cents of it. Even the ledgers could ap reciate that. But no director talked of, Milter's ledger record that day.

"He's done a big thing for all the Line," said Robert Howell, the youngest direct or, somewhat ashamed of the ship named after him. "And he's an old man now. I say we don't merely give him another watch and a gift of money and the regular vote of thanks. I say we let him take his ease from now on, and retire him_ with full pay on a pension!"
"Retire him to reward him?" snorted old Blaine, who was proud of his name sake ship and who, besides being the old est director, was the president of the Line. "That man has a ship as long as he wants it. That's what he has from me over my name to-day."

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